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THE TIMES



FRIDAY JANUARY 12 1990

30p

Pay demands threaten jobs says Thatcher

UK wages rising faster than competitors'

By Robin Oakley, Tim Jones, Kevin Eason and Richard Ford

By David Rhys Jones
Among the happiest competitors in the XIV Commonwealth Games at Edinburgh, because it will be three bowlers who forced to miss the last game at Edinburgh, because it has been considered to be a professional. The way they tour ranks may interest others of other sports.

David Bryant and Allcock of England, and Woodward for Scotland, who were three will play at Palermo, thanks to a nifty referee of the word "amateur". International Bowling Federation (IBF).

Board members were being tested by the right-winner, paying to go down the stairs at Palermo, while just down the road, Meadowbank, amateur and Fife, Thompson, Sek, and Faith, Whistred, going for gold.

Wood was then—and

a modest self-employed mechanic from Cirencester, who had dreamt of doing his title on home territory, burned his doors by virtue of his ability to roll westward.

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Mrs Thatcher told MPs that it was "very disturbing" that while wage costs in Britain had risen 6 per cent in the third quarter, those in the US had risen only 2 per cent and those in West Germany by only 1 per cent. Meanwhile, wage costs had decreased by 1 per cent in Japan, 3 per cent in France and 4 per cent in The Netherlands.

The Prime Minister de-

sired: "If our wage costs rise faster than those of our competitors, our competitors will get the orders and the jobs. The movement of wage costs is very disturbing."

By Robin Oakley, Tim Jones, Kevin Eason and Richard Ford

urged industry to remember that if it permitted wage deals to price its goods out of the market, it would be pricing its own workers out of jobs.

In reply to Mr Neil Kinnock, Mrs Thatcher said that the Government had made it clear that there was too much money in the system for the output that Britain was

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producing and that steps were being taken to correct it. But Mr Kinnock countered that Mr John Banham, Director-General of the CBI, was right to say that inflation was the Government's fault because it was its deliberate policy to keep mortgage and interest rates high, to increase fares and electricity prices and to impose shortly the poll tax and the uniform business rate.

Ministers appreciate that the Government could be caught in a vicious spiral: the longer interest rates have to be kept high, the stronger the pressure will be for high percentage wage increases, which will not be foreseen when interest and mortgage rates come down.

Mrs Thatcher's pay warning had been foreshadowed earlier by a comment from Mr Michael Howard, Secretary of State for Employment, that it was no use people winning large wage increases this year if they lost their jobs next year.

Last night, however, unions representing local authority workers ignored such warnings and put in pay claims for increases of up to 18.7 per cent.

In separate developments, unions representing BBC employees called for a 15 per cent increase on average pay, and air traffic controllers demanded overtime payments of up to £300 a day. Union leaders representing 7,000 manual workers at VSEL shipyard in Barrow, Cumbria also submitted a 15 per cent claim which, they said, was "fair and not excessive". Big claims are also expected to be made by workers in the gas, electricity, water and rail industries.

In the Commons yesterday, Mrs Thatcher agreed with Mr Terence Higgins, a Conservative backbencher, that productivity increases did not automatically justify pay increases in industries where demand was going down.

She said that productivity increases sometimes came from substantially increased investment of capital. Those who made that investment must have a return on their capital and the consumer, too, was entitled to price reductions from productivity increases.

Pressure on pay is expected to be fuelled by pay review recommendations for doctors, nurses and top civil servants. All are expected to be offered more than the 9 per cent rejected by ambulance crews.

The threat to the Channel tunnel has evaporated after leaders of the 208 banks backing the project agreed to lend Eurotunnel up to £400 million so that work can continue beyond the end of the month.

The release of fresh funds follows an agreement between Eurotunnel and Transmanche Link, the Anglo-French construction company building the tunnel. The agreement brings to an end the dispute over soaring costs, estimated at £7.2 billion.

The crews in West Sussex indicated they would ignore appeals by Mr Roger Poole, the chief union negotiator, to maintain emergency and 999 services and would stay out on strike "until suspended staff are reinstated on full pay or if there is a reasonable and just settlement to the national

strike".

In London, the police were called in to the headquarters

Continued on page 22, col 1

Soviet leader takes his case to the people



Street debate: A forceful President Gorbachov yesterday engaging in exchanges with residents of Vilnius, the capital, about Lithuania's rift with Moscow.

Gorbachov puts his fate in Lithuania's hands

By Nick Worrall in Vilnius and Mary Dejersky in London

More than 300,000 people — nearly a tenth of Lithuania's population — stood in silent protest in the centre of the capital Vilnius yesterday to impress on President Gorbachov their demand for the republic to become independent from Moscow.

The Soviet leader had earlier begun his first visit to the Baltic republic by saying that Lithuania's quest for separation — manifested last month in the decision by the republic's Communist Party to split with the Soviet Communist Party — could lead to tragedy.

He said his personal fate depended on the success of his policy in the country's restive outlying republics.

"Nothing will be decided without you. We shall decide everything together," Mr Gorbachov pledged as he mingled with local residents. "We have embarked on this path and I am the one who

chose it. My personal fate is linked to this choice," he said.

Whole families, many with children held up as symbols of the republic's future, crowded into the main square in central

Berlin — Herz Haas Madras, the East German Prime Minister, ideology chief, said that for centuries Lithuania was a toy in other people's hands. "Now we can say it has ceased being a toy and decides its own fate. No one can stop our march to independence."

After the speeches, Mr Landsbergis declared 15 minutes' silence: "Let us be silent until we hear the bells of the cathedral toll," he said. "Let us be silent with one thought and one wish. We are a free people. We will create a free Lithuania." When the cathedral bells rang out, the choir of the Lithuanian academy of sciences sang the national anthem, "Lithuania land of heroes".

Mr Gorbachov, who arrived

Continued on page 22, col 5

UK base to be US intelligence centre

By Michael Evans, Defence Correspondent

RAF Molesworth, the former cruise missile site in Cambridgeshire, is to be converted into an American wartime emergency headquarters and a special centre for US intelligence analysis, it was announced yesterday.

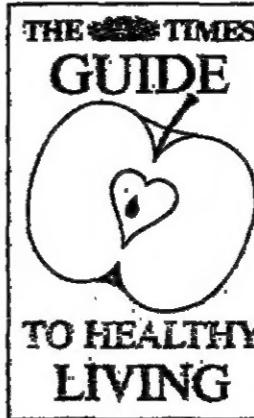
Molesworth has been run on a "care and maintenance" basis since last January when the US Air Force 303rd Tactical Missile Wing was disbanded after the last of the 18 cruise missiles had been removed from the site.

Some buildings, such as the special cruise missile "garages", will be subject to inspection by the Soviet Union for 11 years under the terms of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

However, the United States is planning to house the American Joint Analysis Centre, now located in Stuttgart, West Germany, at the site. Soviet inspectors will be barred from the two buildings to be built.

The Government has confirmed that it plans to remove all commoners' rights at RAF Greenham Common, the Berkshire base which still has cruise missiles in opera-

How healthy are you?



● How healthy is the way you live? On Monday *The Times* begins an important five-part series to point you towards a healthier lifestyle.

● A question of health: the series begins with a quiz by Dr Thomas Stuttaford to help you assess the risks you face.

Find out how you score in *The Times* on Monday. The series will also look at:

● How your work affects your health. Can you do anything about it? And can you learn to thrive on stress?

● Is good health a case of mind over matter or is exercise more important than attitude?

● Are some parts of Britain healthier than others? And can you improve your environment?

● How important is sex and a happy relationship to your health?

● Put yourself on the right path in the 1990s with *The Times* Guide to Healthy Living all next week.

NEW CUTLERY FOR OLD



Defiant 999 crews go on indefinite strike

By Tim Jones, Employment Affairs Correspondent

Ambulance union leaders were last night fighting to maintain the discipline of their 18-week dispute as crews in some West Sussex stations walked out on indefinite strike and more Army ambulances were called in to help the hard-pressed police.

The crews in West Sussex indicated they would ignore appeals by Mr Roger Poole, the chief union negotiator, to maintain emergency and 999 services and would stay out on strike "until suspended staff are reinstated on full pay or if there is a reasonable and just settlement to the national

strike".

In London, the police were called in to the headquarters

Continued on page 22, col 1

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Accountancy examinations

The Institute of Chartered Accountants' exam results will be published in tomorrow's *Times*. Copies of the paper will be available from 10pm tonight at Victoria and King's Cross stations, Leicester Square and Piccadilly Circus.

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Even Maggie hasn't thought that yet...

CEAUSES FIXED WEATHER

CEAUSES

NEWS ROUNDUP

Crew of 19 saved from sinking ship

Nineteen seamen were rescued yesterday after they abandoned their stricken freighter in a gale in the north Atlantic (David Sapsted writes).

They were picked up by the tanker B T Nestor after boarding two lifeboats from their stricken vessel, the 7,000-tonne Irving, which was reported to be taking water and listing in 40-knot winds 800 miles west of Land's End.

A mayday message received by Falmouth Coastguard began an international rescue operation. A search-and-rescue Nimrod from RAF Kinloss, a US Navy aircraft from the Azores and two ships, including the 70,000-tonne Nestor, made for the scene. One member of the freighter's crew was injured.

The Bermudan-registered freighter, owned by Kent Lines, was sailing from Canada to Rouen, in France, with a cargo of wood pulp and newsprint. Several containers were lost overboard when the ship encountered problems yesterday afternoon.

Gallery attack remand

A man accused of slashing a painting at the National Gallery on Wednesday appeared at Bow Street Magistrates' Court yesterday and was remanded in custody until February 1. Martin Paul Came, of Exeter, aged 27 and unemployed, is charged with criminal damage to "La Mademoiselle Del Gatto" by the Italian master Federico Baroccio. Usually known as "The Virgin with a cat", the work, painted before 1577, can be restored, despite at least eight Stanley-knife slashes.

Bomb man is jailed

A man from Northern Ireland who admitted having mortar bomb parts in his garage near the border was jailed for five years yesterday by the Special Criminal Court in Dublin. Timothy Megarry, aged 25, admitted having ammunition and bomb parts near Letterkenny in Co Donegal on March 18, 1988. Mr Patrick McEntee, for the defence, said Megarry wanted publicly to dissociate himself from the IRA. He had fled from Belfast in 1971 to avoid the unrest.

Alert for giant eagle

Bird-watchers on the east coast were yesterday hoping for a sighting of a rare white-tailed eagle from Europe. The bird, with a wing span of about eight feet, was first seen on Wednesday flying over the sea off Scott Head, near Blakeney, on the north Norfolk coast. Mr Richard Millington, Bird Information Service spokesman, said it was later seen at Titchwell and off Hunstanton and was last reported heading towards the Lincolnshire coast.

TV station diversifies

The Welsh language fourth television channel, S4C, the most expensive television service per viewer in the world, is to move away from concentrating on the Welsh-speaking rural heartland that prompted its creation (Richard Evans writes). Although Sunday night hymn-singing and a Welsh soap opera top the ratings, only 20 per cent of the population speak Welsh. The channel plans more entertainment and "lifestyle" shows. More programmes will also be subtitled.

Opt-out ruling sought

The High Court is to be asked for the first time to rule on whether the Government acted reasonably in allowing a school to opt out (David Tyler writes). Avon County Council says Mr John MacGregor, Secretary of State for Education and Science, acted unreasonably in giving the 864-pupil Beechen Cliff school, Bath, grant-maintained status from April. It says the move wrecked plans to reorganise secondary education.

Headteacher crisis, page 5

Warning of Aids spread in spite of drop in cases

By Thomson Prentice, Science Correspondent

The Aids epidemic in Britain appears to have slowed in the last few months, but there is a continuing danger of it spreading into the general population, the Department of Health said yesterday.

Another 51 cases of the disease were reported last month, according to the department's latest figures.

The total of known sufferers is 2,830, of whom 1,612 have died. A further 11,676 people

are known to be infected with HIV, the Aids virus.

About five people a day became infected in the final quarter of last year. However, the total of new cases during that period was 181, compared with 277 in the previous quarter.

More than 95 per cent of all reported cases continue to be among men, the great majority of whom are homosexual or bisexual.

based on confidential assumptions about how much poll tax they will actually collect.

The Conservative-controlled Association of District Councils has already made representations to the Home Office urging it to equip magistrates' courts to cope with an expected doubling or tripling in the numbers of cases of failure to pay.

Many treasurers concede that much of their planning for poll tax, due to be introduced in April, is based on guess work. According to Department of Environment figures published last month, the City of Birmingham had registered 94 per cent of its eligible population of poll-

tax payers. But Mr Roger Burton, deputy city treasurer, said yesterday that Whitehall was working on out-of-date figures. Since the announcement, council officials had canvassed a further 17,000 properties seeking details of households, he said.

Mr Burton said: "We have to be prudent and will have to make an allowance for non-collection of community charge, especially as we don't yet know whether the Government's estimate of Birmingham's total population is in fact correct.

And we won't know that till after the next Census of Population."

Although the Association of Dis-

trict Councils professed itself broadly satisfied with Whitehall estimates, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities — representing city councils where populations tend to be more mobile and harder to count than in the shire districts — has pointed out anomalies, including reports from the Environment Department of some councils registering more than 100 per cent of their "official" population.

Since the Government announced that poll-tax registration across England and Wales had been 99 per cent successful, some big city councils have received additional information on households from the

Department of Social Security. One council found that up to a third of residents receiving income support had failed to register — even though the Government's figures registration was nearly 100 per cent.

The key question for treasurers and councillors over the next few weeks is how much loss of poll tax they build into their budgetary assumptions for 1990-91.

Much will depend on the vigour with which councils chase defaulters. By law, decisions on how far and how fast to seek payment will be taken by the community charge officer, a council official, rather than by councillors.

Patten defies threat from rebels over local grants

By Nicholas Wood, Political Correspondent

The Government yesterday stood firm in the face of a threatened backbench Conservative revolt and announced largely unchanged figures for the community charge or poll tax, which comes into effect in April.

Mr Chris Patten, Secretary of State for the Environment, told MPs: "I have decided to confirm in the main the proposals which I described in my statement on November 6 and put forward in the consultation paper."

Total central government support for local authority spending remained at £23.1 billion for next year, an increase of 3.5 per cent, and the overall spending target for more than 400 councils in England stayed at £32.8 billion.

But minor changes in the calculations of revenue support grant to individual councils, triggered by updated population figures and a revised formula for snow clearance costs, will mean changes of a few pounds to the earlier poll tax projections. The average forecast figure remains at £27.8 billion.

Local authorities will also benefit to the tune of £180 million by the Government's decision to boost their cash flow by making available £2,373 million, one quarter of the grant, in April and May, when they would be still waiting for charge-payers to meet their bills.

The formula used for calculating the final figures on which councils will base their budgets for 1990-91 and their poll tax bills has been the subject of protests by many Tory MPs, who maintain that the £1.3 billion of concessions over the next four years do not go far enough.

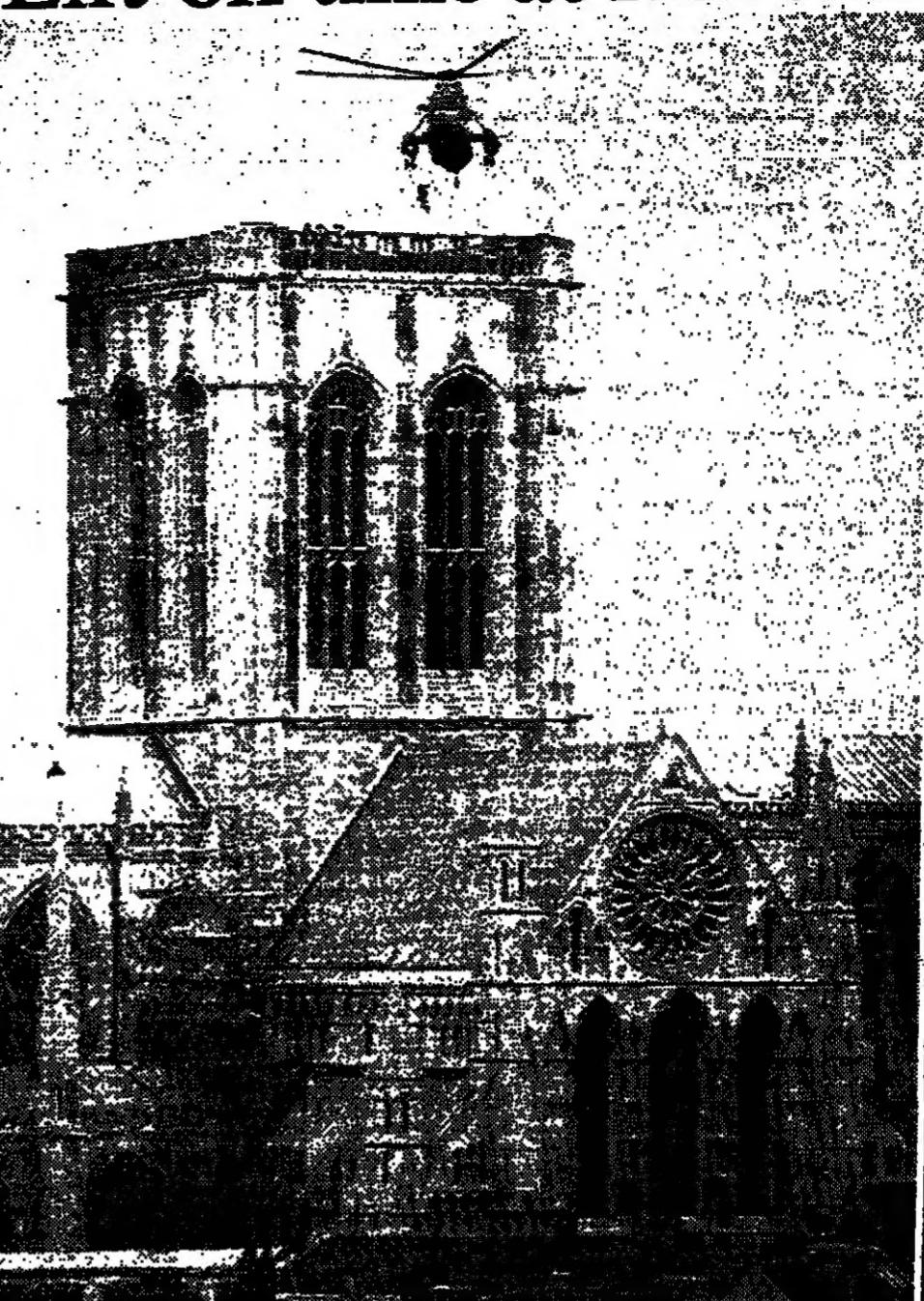
Mr Patten's announcement gave no more ground. Last night the possibility of a last-ditch appeal to the Prime Minister before next Thursday's Commons votes on orders implementing the

increases would be applied over at least five years and no firm would have to pay more than 20 per cent extra in real terms in any one year.

"It will be the first time that businesses have had an assurance about rates," she said.

Mr Norman Lamont, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, sought to stiffen the resolve of potential Tory wavers by warning them against falling for "scare stories" from council treasurers calling for wage restraint in the new year.

However, documents circulated among the company's 32,000-strong hourly-paid workforce justified the offer claiming that it would go hand-in-hand

Lift-off time at Minster

An RAF Sea King helicopter winches Warrant Officer Steve Lynch from the central tower of York Minster in a simulated rescue. The exercise was prompted by an emergency in August when a woman had a fatal heart attack after climbing to the top of Durham Cathedral tower.

Appeal for pub bombs trial notes

By Stewart Tansler
Crime Correspondent

Detectives investigating allegations against Surrey officers in the Guildford four-case have appealed to defence lawyers for notes of the trial 15 years ago because no transcript or shorthand record exists.

Official notes of the case were destroyed in 1982. The police appeal for help was sent out several weeks ago by the investigating team from Avon and Somerset police who are examining allegations of fabrication, concoction and suppression involving four Surrey officers, one retired.

The three serving officers were suspended from duties last October after the Court of Appeal quashed the convictions of the three men and one woman convicted for the 1974 IRA bomb attack on two Guildford public houses.

Last May, according to a Crown statement in the Court of Appeal, the Avon and Somerset officers found Surrey police papers which raised questions about interviews with two of the defendants.

The absence of the transcript or official notes of the proceedings held at the Central Criminal Court in 1975 could be an embarrassment, raising questions about the progress of the investigation and the time it is taking.

There is legal speculation about the results of the investigation in the absence of a transcript. If the suspended officers are charged after a long delay, magistrates or judges could decide that the defendants have been unfairly treated because of the time lag.

Ford offers 20% skills incentive

By Kevin Eason
Motoring Correspondent

Ford is prepared to double its 10.2 per cent wage offer as an incentive for workers to become some of the most skilled assembly line staff in Britain. The disclosure could further enraged ministers calling for wage restraint in the new year.

The reward would be an extra allowance of 10 per cent, which could add £45 to the £24 a week already on offer from the 10.2 per cent basic rate rise.

However, documents circulated

with radical productivity improvements. Extra allowances would be available for workers who want to join an elite team maintaining the robots which operate in the company's most automated plants. They would have to pass electronics examinations and work in special manufacturing teams.

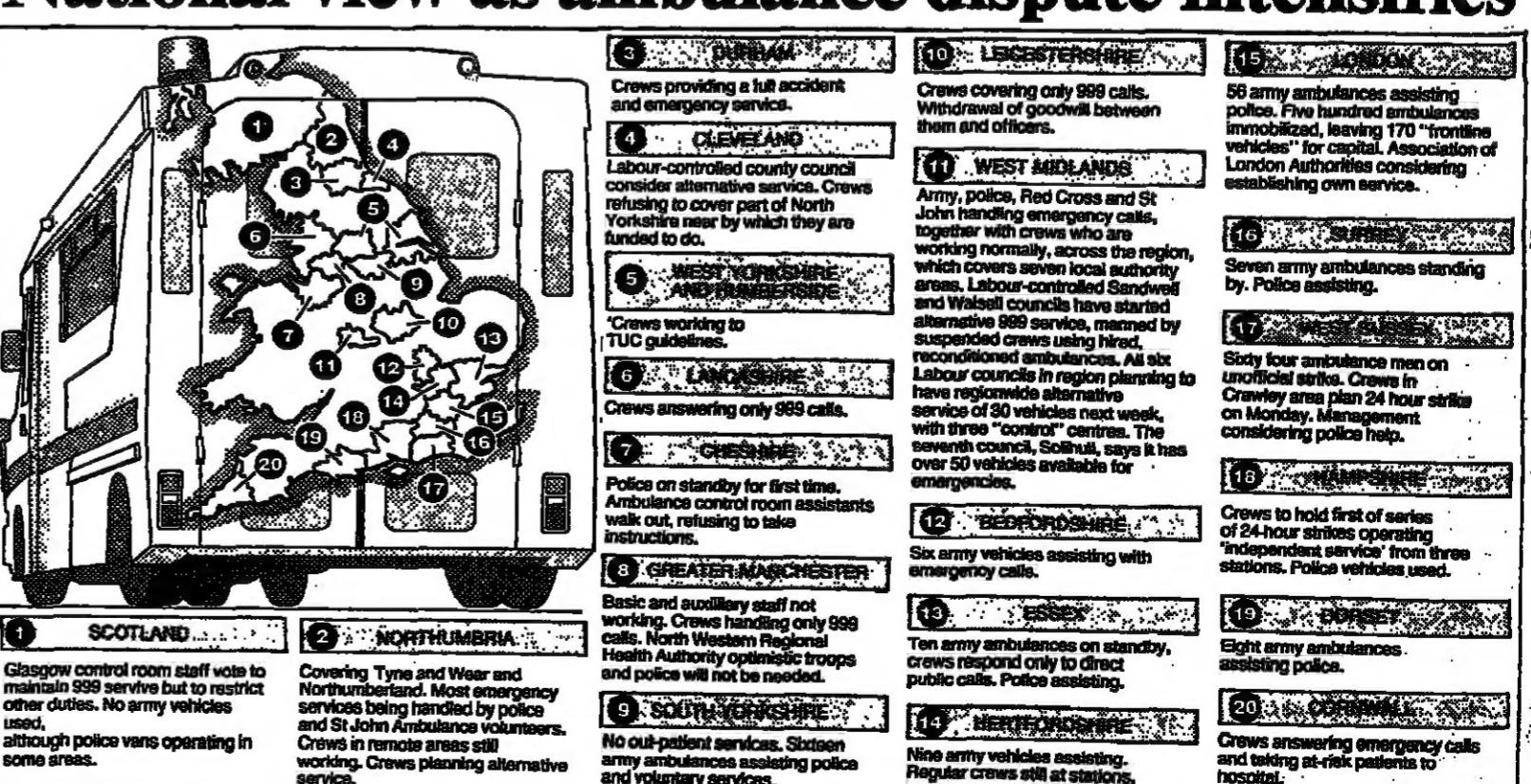
The reward would be an extra allowance of 10 per cent, which could add £45 to the £24 a week already on offer from the 10.2 per cent basic rate rise.

Unions are now prepared to call a

wednesday on the basic two-year offer, which would put 10.2 per cent extra in pay packets this year and 7.5 per cent or inflation plus 2.5 per cent, whichever is the greater, next year.

However, workers seem likely to reject the package. The unions point out that the company made £673 million profit last year and should have a surplus of more than £70 million this year.

• One-hundred-and-fifty men on the Jaguar XJS sports car production line in Coventry walked out on one-day strike yesterday in a dispute over demarcation.

National view as ambulance dispute intensifies

As the ambulance dispute intensified yesterday with several crews walking out on indefinite strike, 164 army ambulances were assisting local authorities in nine regions. Services in some areas, including Wales, were working almost normally, but other parts of the country were facing severe problems.

Air controllers may be sought in US after pay clash

By Harvey Elliott, Air Correspondent

Air traffic controllers demanding £200-£300 a day to work overtime have been rebuffed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), which plans instead to recruit additional controllers from the Armed Forces or the United States.

The authority asked controllers to work overtime last September when it became clear that there would be a drastic staff shortage this summer. It offered to pay volunteers a flat rate equivalent to normal pay (between £74 and £164, depending on

salary and experience, for an additional eight-hour shift). The controllers' union, the Institute of Professional Managers and Specialists, told its members that the offer was insufficient and advised them not to respond. As a result, only two controllers from a fully-qualified operational staff of 1,400 have volunteered.

The union also insists that overtime should be strictly monitored to prevent fatigue, and says that no controller should do more than one extra

shift in 20. The CAA says it needs at least 100 more staff immediately because of the continued growth in air traffic, and that by 1992 it will require an additional 600.

In addition it plans to train former military controllers to civilian standards and to ask agencies in the US to find former controllers prepared to work in Britain.

• BBC staff are seeking an average pay rise of 15 per cent, in an attempt to catch up with salaries offered by commercial television and radio, which

are about 30 per cent higher (our Media Editor writes).

The claim will be formally submitted by unions on the eve of a meeting later this month at which BBC governors and executives are expected to approve a radical re-organisation leading to job cuts of up to 25 per cent of the 28,000-strong workforce during the 1990s.

The pay demand includes a 20 per cent increase for the lowest-paid staff, who earn about £7,000 a year, and would be worth 15 per cent on

IT MUST BE TIME FOR THE ALFRED DUNHILL SALE.

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Department of Social Security, a council found that up to a third of pensioners receiving income support failed to register — even though the Government was nearly 100 per cent. The key question for trustees and councillors over the next few weeks is how much loss of pensioners will build into their budget assumptions for 1990/91.

Much will depend on the rate at which councils change the law fast to seek payment when taken by the community officer, a council official, rather than a councillor.

Appeal for pub bombing trial notes

By Stewart Taylor
Crime Correspondent

Detectives investigating allegations against Surrey officers in the Guildford bomb have appealed to defend the right to privacy of the individual, two years ago because no one exists.

Official notes of the police appeal for help were destroyed in 1982, but several weeks ago an investigating team from the Home Office examined allegations of fabrication, concoction and suppression involving Surrey officers, one of whom was suspended after the Guildford public house bombing.

Last May, according to a Crown statement in the Court of Appeal, the Avenham and Somerton officers for Surrey police were raised questions about their conduct with two of their defendants.

The absence of any transcript or official notes of proceedings held at the Old Bailey Criminal Court in 1982 could be an embarrassment raising questions about the progress of the investigation and the time it is taking.

There is legal speculation about the results of the investigation in the absence of transcripts. If the Surrey officers are charged with long-term malpractice, judges could decide that defendants have been unfairly treated because of the lack of transcripts.

However, the peers say it

MPs issue warning over listeria and support irradiation

By Sheila Gunn and Pearce Wright

Fears about the growing threat of food poisoning led to pressure on the Government yesterday to make listeria a notifiable disease and to support irradiation to combat food-borne infections.

Two reports from select committees of both Houses highlight the threat of listeria and other infections from modern methods of food production, processing and storage.

Their publication comes in the wake of the Commons agriculture committee report this week which warned of the danger of eating eggs imported from countries without Britain's health controls.

The Commons social services committee called on doctors to be required to report all cases of listeria to health authorities.

Soft cheeses should be avoided by women who are even contemplating having a baby, particularly if they have had a miscarriage or stillbirth, it says.

Official figures estimate that one in 7,000 pregnant women loses her baby as a result of listeria — a total of more than 80 stillbirths or miscarriages a year in the UK.

In the cross-party committee's new report on listeria — its second in seven months — the committee stood by its earlier criticism that the Government should have warned pregnant women sooner about the risks of eating soft cheese.

The 124-page report from the House of Lords backs the Government's plans to allow the irradiation of food within the EC proposed limits to control the spread of listeria, salmonella and other food-borne infections.

Mr Field: Second inquiry after government criticism.

However, the peers say it

could be open to abuse by unscrupulous traders who might use irradiation to mask stale food. They call on the Government to delay allowing the sale of irradiated food in Britain until a Community-wide scheme is agreed.

The Government is proposing to lift the ban on irradiated food but wants it marked to give consumers the choice.

The peers, like the Government, make clear they have been influenced in support for irradiation by the rise in food poisoning outbreaks.

Public Health Laboratory surveys found that up to 60 per cent of all uncooked chicken carcasses in shops is contaminated to some extent by salmonella, and the same percentage by listeria.

In addition, listeria infects 12 per cent of pre-cooked, ready-to-eat poultry; 16 per cent of salami-type sausages; 50 per cent of raw pork sausages; and 10 per cent of soft cheeses on sale.

The peers conclude: "The committee consider that irradiation could help to raise standards of food safety and to protect public health. The

committee stands by its earlier criticisms that GPs and midwives could have played a more active part in the detection of listeriosis in their patients by being made more aware of the clinical details of the disease".

First report: Food Poisoning, Listeria and Listeriosis Report: Follow Up, Commons social services select committee (Stationery Office, £6.20).

Fourth report: Irradiation of Foodstuffs, Lords European Communities select committee (Stationery Office, £13.90).

Mr Field: Second inquiry after government criticism.

However, the peers say it

increasing sophistication of systems of production and processing, whether on the farm or at the factory, shop and home, are not capable of guaranteeing the safety of food.

"Irradiation will certainly not do so either, but it can serve as a useful means of reducing the contamination of some foods by certain organisms."

However, they want urgent research into the effect of irradiation, particularly on vitamins and food exposed to pesticides.

The social services committee recommends making listeriosis a notifiable disease and tightening food hygiene.

High-risk ready-cooked foods and soft cheeses need refrigeration in shops and the home should be stored at or below temperatures of 3°C, rather than the accepted standard of 5°C, it says.

Mr Frank Field, the committee chairman, said the latest investigation into listeriosis was conducted because the Government complained the committee had unfairly criticized officials over last year's salmonella and listeria food poisoning problems.

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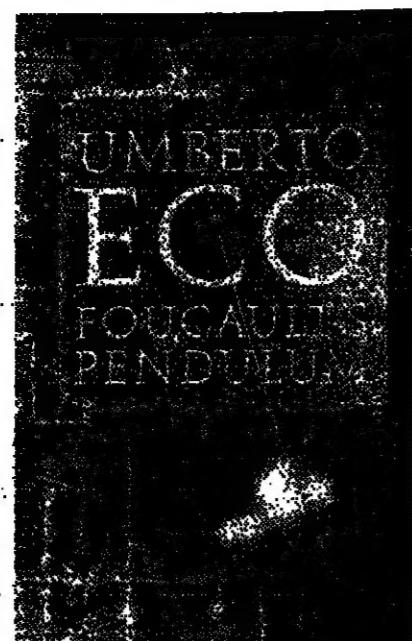
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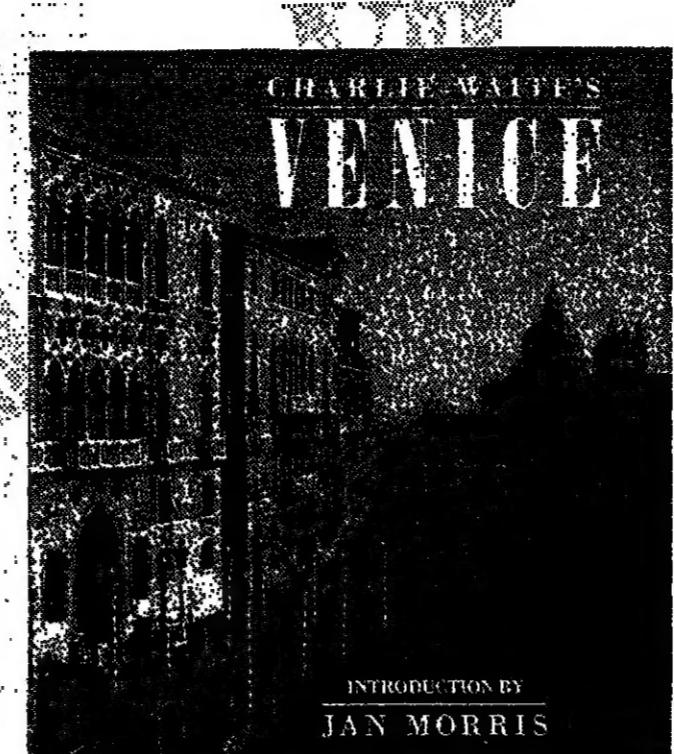
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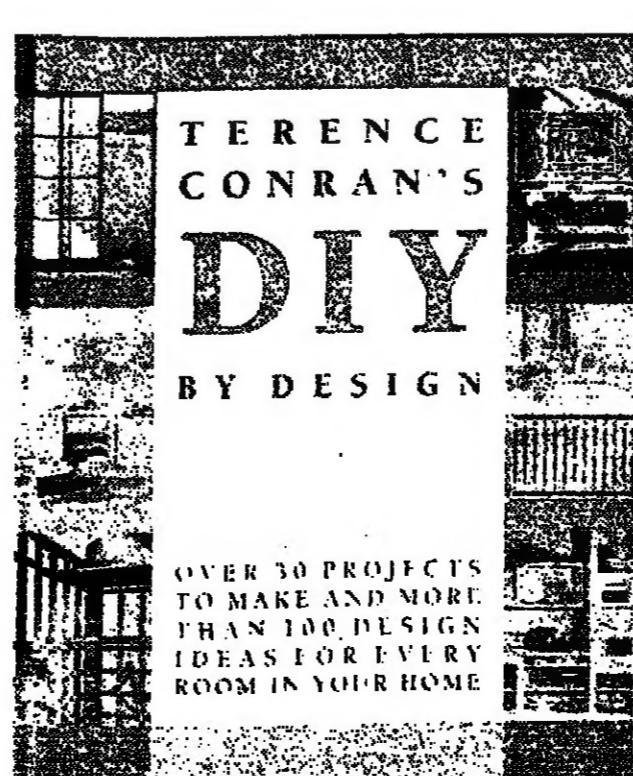


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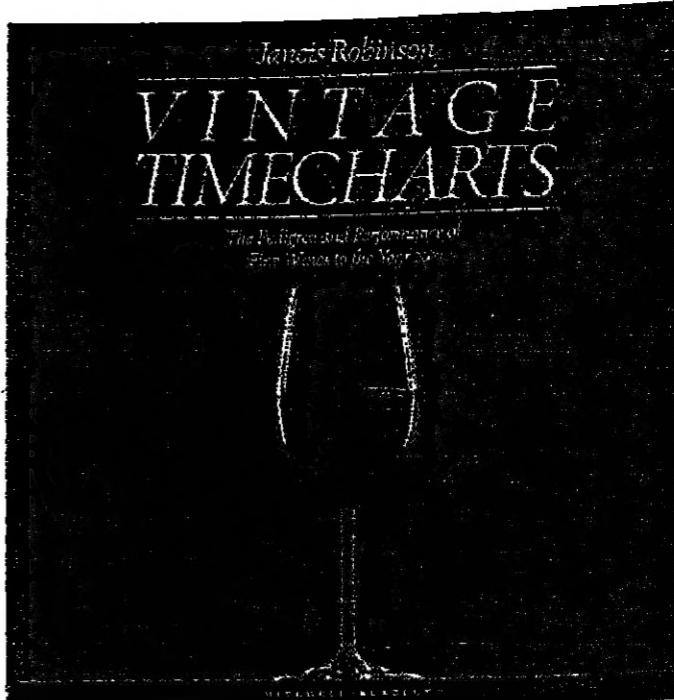
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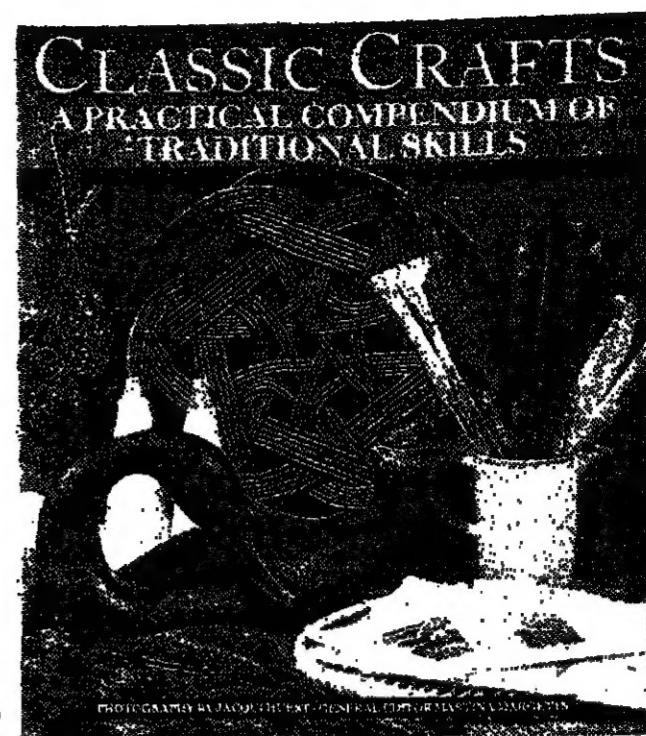
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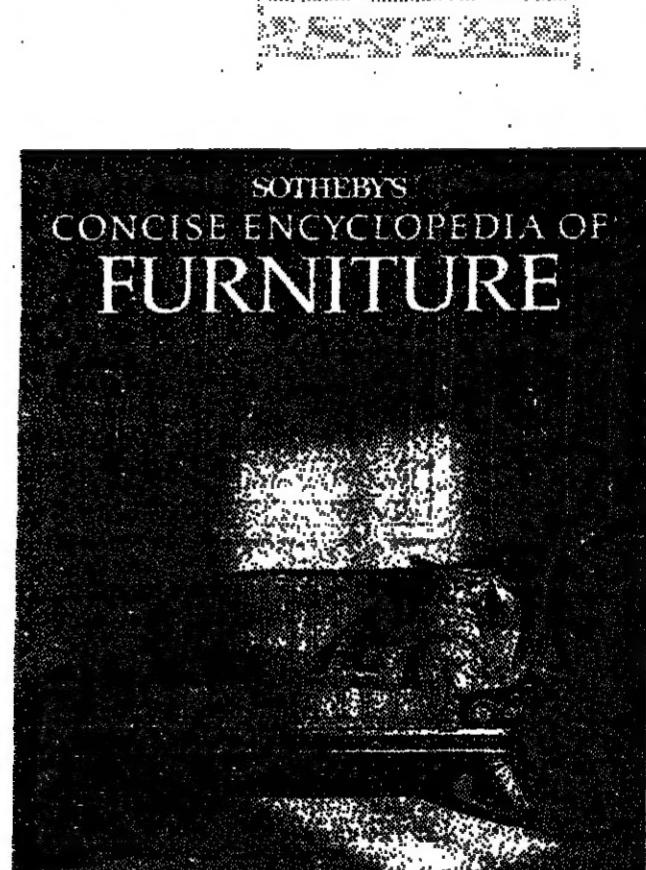
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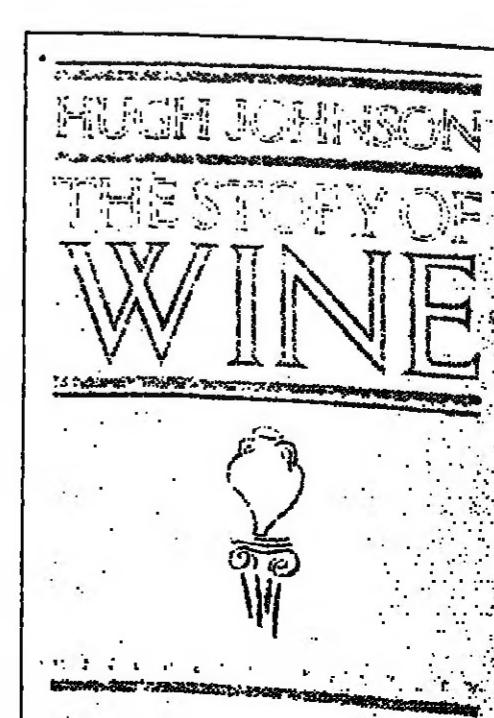
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PEUGEOT. THE LION GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH.

EC laws 'flouted' to make motorists buy costly cars in UK

By Kevin Eason, Motoring Correspondent

The gap in car prices between Britain and the rest of the European Community is widening with UK buyers paying up to a third more than motorists across the Channel.

British consumers buying abroad are being penalized by manufacturers, distributors and even the authorities in breach of European law, according to the European Consumers' Union.

The organization is demanding action by the European Commission so that motorists can be guaranteed the right to buy cars anywhere within the Common Market.

A highly-critical report disclosed that far from achieving the EC objective of harmonizing car prices across the 12 members' nations, the gap between Britain and the rest was growing.

The EC allows for a differential of up to 12 per cent between nations to allow for local market conditions. However, average pre-tax car prices are 31 per cent higher in Britain than in Belgium, compared with 19 per cent in 1987.

In Britain, half of new cars are bought by the company car fleet industry which pushes up

prices for higher specification models. A £12,500 Audi 80E cost about 43 per cent more than in Belgium.

The organization also found that a Citroen AX at £5,000 and a BMW 316 at £11,500 in Britain were 38 per cent and 27 per cent more expensive.

The consumers' union, which screened 1,400 cars, said that manufacturers and distributors discouraged UK buyers from going abroad.

The report said some distributors would not honour warranties on imported cars. A number of dealers abroad, thought to be acting on the instructions of manufacturers, were refusing to sell models with right-hand drive to non-residents. They also imposed unreasonable delivery delays of up to a year and unjustifiable delivery costs.

The report accused public authorities, too, of imposing unfair delays in registering cars imported privately.

Singling out the UK, it said British car-licensing authorities repeatedly refused to register cars imported by professional "parallel" importers — companies outside official dealer networks helping in-

dividuals import cheaper cars.

The consumers' organization said that Nissan and Isuzu in Britain had refused to honour guarantees on cars imported outside the dealer network. Rover and Volkswagen were accused of refusing to sell cars in the Irish Republic for shipment on to Britain.

The European Court of Justice has declared itself in favour of private car imports and the commission has set out rules on the matter.

However, the report adds: "In spite of these community initiatives, consumers still encounter major problems when trying to benefit from the important price differences existing within the EC. Member states, as well as manufacturers and distributors, have introduced — entirely against the law — a wide range of obstacles to parallel imports."

Last night, Nissan dismissed claims that it would not fulfil warranty guarantees and said it would cover all guarantees for its customers. The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders said cars may look cheaper abroad but might not have the high specifications of UK models.

Cycle star heads home for city contests

ADRIAN BROOKS



The cycling star Joey McLonghlin does some forward planning for a series of races to be held in 10 British cities over the next three years. Scottish Provident, the life assurance company, has provided £2.3 million in a record sponsorship of the sport. McLonghlin, who won the Tour of Britain in 1987, has since competed on the Continental circuit. He says he is eager to return to racing in Britain, particularly in his home town of Liverpool. Sport, page 30

Sick notes

'Less liberal GPs could save £11m'

By Jill Sherman, Social Services Correspondent

At least £11 million could be saved every year if doctors were less liberal in handing out sick notes, the National Audit Office said yesterday.

A report from the Comptroller and Auditor General argues that too many people are receiving invalidity benefit because doctors are unaware of the criteria for eligibility and often put too much weight on family and social circumstances.

The number receiving invalidity benefit, which is given after six months' sickness, has risen from 760,000 in 1983/84 to more than a million in 1987/88, it says.

The cost increased from £2.4 billion to £3.15 billion during the same period and is expected to exceed £4 billion this year.

The growth in expenditure reflected three trends: more go on to benefit than come off, and people are receiving it longer; the average age of recipients is increasing; and the proportion of married women on benefit is increasing.

"Evidence suggests that non-medical factors have contributed to this growth rather than any underlying increase in the incidence of sickness," the report says.

A 1 per cent drop in the number of people receiving the unearned benefit would save almost £11 million a year, the report says.

The Audit Office emphasized that it was not trying to penalize the sick. Those entitled to invalidity benefit would get it. Those that were not, were likely to get other, admittedly less generous benefits, such as unemployment benefit or income support.

The basic rate of invalidity benefit is £43.60 a week, although additional payments can increase this to £60 or £100 a week.

To qualify, a person has to obtain a statement of incapacity to work in any job — a sick

note — from a GP. However, some GPs have interpreted the guidance as inability to work in the same job and have not considered whether the person could do alternative work. GPs are also more likely to give sick notes if the person is unemployed for reasons other than sickness.

The audit officials found "a degree of uncertainty" among GPs when deciding whether someone could work, and concluded that to a "significant extent" doctors were overlooking the requirement to consider capacity for other types of work.

A Gallup poll of 1,989 doctors by the Audit Office showed that only a third had refused to issue a sickness certificate in the last six months. Of the remainder, most had only rejected two or three.

Asked about their awareness of social security benefits,

● Most doctors have no understanding of invalidity benefit ●

78 per cent said that they had little or no understanding of invalidity benefit. Among newly trained GPs, the figure rose to 93 per cent.

Many GPs did not know that invalidity benefit was more generous than unemployment benefit or realize that there were alternative benefits for the sick.

Almost half considered non-medical factors, such as loss of benefit if they refused the certificate, and a third considered family circumstances. Fourteen per cent considered the local employment situation as a factor in giving certificates.

The report recommends that the Department of Social Security should improve guidance and training to doctors.

National Audit Office Report on Invalidity Benefit (Stationery Office: £4.60)

Reforms will speed up damages cases

By Frances Gibb, Legal Affairs Correspondent

Victims of accidents are likely to win awards of damages more swiftly as the result of a package of reforms to speed up civil court procedures published yesterday.

Under the new rules, more disputes are also likely to settle out of court as litigants will be encouraged to be more open. Courts will have tougher powers to impose costs penalties, where parties in a dispute reasonably refuse to admit facts or disclose documents before trial.

There will be new, strict time limits for the serving of a writ, generally four months from the date of issue by the court, in place of the present 12-month limit.

The new rules, the first batch in a series of reforms to court procedures being brought by the Lord Chancellor's Department, implement recommendations of the Civil Justice Review Body in 1988. From February 3, courts in personal injury cases will have wider powers to try the issue of liability — who is at fault — separately from the issue of damages.

A spokeswoman for the group said yesterday that existing limits were causing further stress and suffering, particularly to parents who had lost teenage children. At present, bereavement damages of £3,500 are paid to a spouse or the parents of victims under 18.

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Secret police become the new Sam Spades of Poland

From Roger Boyes
Warsaw

Move over, Philip Marlowe; hang up your holster, Sam Spade: this is for real. There is no lispin blonde in the Warsaw offices of the Ceter Protection Agency, no hard stuff in the drawer.

Private eyes are in vogue in Eastern Europe, and they have a suspiciously professional air about them. Economic reform has opened the way for a new entrepreneurial breed, rich businessmen who feel nervous in the classless society.

At the same time the infrastructure of a police state has started to crumble. Secret agents are out of work, and they are missing the old rough and tumble. So supply is adjusting to demand: retired and sacked policemen are setting up their own detective or bodyguard bureaux.

You can spot them in the luxury hotels, wearing the shiny brown suits

they favoured while tailing dissidents. They are the customers who note down the price of every bill after ordering coffee, who strain to catch the conversation of expensively manicured women chatting with much younger but still expensively manicured men.

It is a comedown from the old days when they would pursue Mr Jack Kuroń — now a Cabinet minister — down the stairs, track him through Warsaw, and give him a bit of a dusting.

Over at the Warsaw police precinct, Colonel Krzysztof Zagódzinski is looking worried.

He is getting between five and 10 applications a day to set up detective agencies, mainly from former colleagues in the Interior Ministry, uniformed or secret police, but also from former soldiers.

Dismantling the secret police has entailed closing down their anti-Church and anti-opposition departments and

drastic cutbacks in the bugging of flats. The secret police have been renamed the Office for the Protection of the Constitution and lost some of their old glamour in the process.

The problem for Colonel Zagódzinski is that there are no guidelines for detective bureaux. All he can do is exclude known criminals and the mentally deranged.

"Some former soldiers who were released from the Army because they were mentally unstable or clearly mentally ill have applied. Of course, we turned them down," he said.

The Ceter Protection Agency is in safer hands — four former police officers. They still have good relations with the Interior Ministry, which probably helps when they vet the background of applicants. Their brief is to protect villas, private shops and warehouses, transport vehicles, supply bodyguards and detect crimes more efficiently than the state

police. For the time being, they come fairly cheaply — about 60p an hour plus expenses, compared to more than £60 an hour in Los Angeles.

So far most of their work is in the private sector: errant wives, disappearing husbands. Since alimony is indexed for inflation, a cuckolded husband can save a considerable amount by showing the divorce court that his wife is dead in the wrong.

Crime appears to be rising quickly in Poland, the Soviet Union and East Germany, although the usual analytical problems apply with this claim: perhaps people simply trust the police more and are reporting crimes more often. But anecdotal evidence confirms there is an outbreak of violent crime, especially muggings and rape.

Houses with satellite dishes — a sign of wealth — are frequently burgled. There is an active trade in guard dogs although, given the price of meat, it is cheaper to

hire oneself a human bodyguard. The new wave of private detective agencies caters for the rich and anxious. Mr Andrzej Murawski, of Ceter, says: "We could mobilize a team of 20, put our people on every street corner, if necessary with night vision devices. There are people around who would command us to do that, and who can afford it."

Indeed, with most of the restraints falling from private enterprise, millionaires abound. There are jewellers, manufacturers of sun-glasses, perfumers, cake wholesalers, computer importers and money-changers who have become *de facto* private bankers. They deal in large sums of dollars, almost always in cash, and use their own security networks.

As foreign companies think about investing in Eastern Europe they need as much intelligence as possible about future partners; this, too, can be supplied

by the former secret policemen.

A sign of the times is the Garda Property Protection Agency, which has opened the first gun shop in Eastern Europe. Provided you get an approving letter from the local police chief — usually granted unless you have a criminal record or are under age — it is now an easy matter to buy a gun and ammunition.

There seem to be no restrictions on calibre — Magnums, Colts and many others besides are imported from West Germany. East Germany forbids the transport of arms over its territory, so most of the small arms have come through Vienna and Czechoslovakia.

Those whose hired guns are of the human variety have developed an appropriate advertising pitch. One detective agency director said: "If a Western capitalist wants a bodyguard, we are ready — we can provide the finest."

Modrow olive branch to opposition

From Anne McElvey, East Berlin, and Ian Murray, Bonn

Herr Hans Modrow, the beleaguered East German Prime Minister, has offered the opposition a greater say in the running of the country to offset criticism of his Government's authoritarian style.

He told the first session of the Volkskammer (parliament) in East Berlin this year that the country's peaceful revolution gave it an historic opportunity it must not waste, and called on the opposition to work constructively with the Government in the run-up to the May elections.

"We are ready to talk with all the participants of the Round Table and have offered them the chance to work with us," he said. He also called on the opposition to present concrete suggestions to the Government and choose suitable representatives to take a "direct and responsible part" in the task of governing.

However, he refused to grant opposition demands for a right of veto on government decisions, and warned that public attacks on the legitimacy of his Government would not help to restore political order in the country. His Government had a legitimate right to rule, he said. "I do not recall having become Prime Minister in a putsch."

Herr Modrow's comments came the day after Herr Helmut Kohl, the West German Chancellor, said the Government was viewing political developments in East Germany with growing concern, particularly over the way in which the Communists appeared to be trying to stop the opposition parties from being given a fair chance in the general elections, which are fixed for May 6.

All the main parties in West Germany, however, have since roundly criticized Herr Modrow's declaration to the

Volkskammer, including the leaders of all three coalition parties.

Herr Volker Rübe, General Secretary of the Christian Democrats, found that there was "a far from adequate signal" for an intensification of co-operation between Bonn and East Berlin. Herr Modrow's ideas were a long way behind what was happening in Poland and Hungary. His misgivings were echoed by Herr Theodor Waigel, leader of the Christian Social Union, who said that there should be no question of a co-operation treaty being signed with East Germany until after the election, and Frau Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobsen, General

Secretary of the Free Democratic Party (FDP).

For the opposition Social Democrats (SPD), Herr Hans Büchler said all the signs were that Herr Modrow was trying to consolidate the party's hold on the Volkskammer.

Herr Modrow's speech was a clear attempt to extend an olive branch to the aggrieved opposition within East Germany, who have been threatening to quit the Round Table talks and withdraw their support from Herr Modrow's Government if he did not offer them concessions.

However, his speech was less conciliatory than many

had expected. He criticized the opposition's demand last Monday that he appear before the Round Table to defend his security policy. He also refused the opposition's demands that no new security service be founded in the country to replace the Office of National Security, which is currently being dissolved.

He told the parliament that such a service was necessary to arrest the rise of neo-Nazism in the country.

He promised that the opposition would, however, receive a full account of the intended structure of the security services when it resumes the Round Table talks with the Government next Monday. No old structures, the Prime Minister said, would be left within the redesigned security service, although he stopped short of promising that it would not employ former workers of the Ministry for State Security, as many opposition groups fear.

After widespread protests, including strike action, former state security workers who had been promised three years' redundancy payment will now receive only the statutory payment for one year.

Herr Modrow admitted that industry was suffering from the haemorrhage of East German labour to the West and that 250,000 vacancies could not be filled. More than 1,000 people continue to leave the country daily, in spite of pleas from both the East and West German Governments that they stay in the GDR.

The state of the East German economy was also admitted in full for the first time, with Herr Modrow speaking of gaps and discontinuity in production and failure to fulfil orders, due mainly to the lack of workers and failing materials.



Herr Modrow, right, and Herr Manfred Gerlach, the interim President, in the Volkskammer.

Yugoslavia takes its first steps towards democracy

Belgrade (AP) — Yugoslavia's ruling League of Communists is preparing to give up its monopoly of power and allow the first multi-party elections in 45 years, a leading communist said yesterday.

Mr Stefan Korosec, secretary of the policy-making Central Committee, told a press conference that the communist party would take part in the legislative elections in Yugoslavia's six republics "just as another party (would) with its own programme".

Elections in the republics, which send deputies to the national legislature, are scheduled for April. The new programme, which Mr Korosec said "departs from the model of

authoritarian" communism, still had to be adopted at an extraordinary party congress, which is scheduled to start on January 20.

Yugoslavia had a multi-party system before the Second World War, but that was abolished when the communists led by Tito came to power in 1945.

Mr Korosec also presented to reporters for the first time a final draft of a declaration to be approved by the congress in which the party pledges to relinquish its monopoly on power. It also calls for "free, direct and secret" multi-party elections. The draft declaration says that Yugoslav communists "advocate full participation (of Yugo-

savia) in European integration processes (including) its membership in the European Community, the Council of Europe, the European Free Trade Association and other similar organizations and institutions".

Mr Korosec said that leaders in all of Yugoslavia's divergent communist republics supported the declaration "in principle". However, he also indicated that the document could cause fierce debate between hardliners and more liberal communists.

Yugoslav communists were the first to break with the Soviet-led Communist bloc in 1948, but Yugoslavia, faced with its worst economic and political crisis, has been slower

in adopting the reforms that have swept through Eastern Europe.

Mr Korosec did not elaborate on what, if any, legal guarantees would be made that the party was giving up its leading role. In Hungary, Czechoslovakia and East Germany articles in the constitution guarantee the leading role of the party to constitute itself as an independent party.

Even though Yugoslavia has not formally adopted a law allowing independent political groups and parties to form, numerous political parties have sprung up in the past few months.

Some of the parties have clear nationalist programmes, which has led to fears that this could lead to open clashes between the republics that could seriously threaten the country's unity.

elections", but if they did they might form a coalition with other left-wing parties, such as the Socialist Alliance which is now a communist-led mass organization but plans to constitute itself as an independent party.

Even though Yugoslavia has not formally adopted a law allowing independent political groups and parties to form, numerous political parties have sprung up in the past few months.

Some of the parties have clear nationalist programmes, which has led to fears that this could lead to open clashes between the republics that could seriously threaten the country's unity.

It adds: "A number of major procurement programmes, particularly in the land armaments area, are being scaled back, although it is far too early to tell whether... the Soviet Union will meet Mr Gorbachov's stated spending cuts (of 14.2 per cent in military spending and 19.5 per cent in production)."

In a recent speech to the Congress of People's Deputies, Mr Valentin Pavlov, the Soviet Finance Minister, said the full 14 per cent reduction in military spending would be implemented by the end of 1991. He also said the 1990 defence budget would be 70.9 billion roubles.

One reason for the low Soviet figure on defence spending, the alliance report says, is the apparent exclusion

Man in the News: Algirdas Brazauskas

Engineer who aims to remake a nation

By Daniel Treisman

When President Gorbachov chose Mr Algirdas Brazauskas to head the Lithuanian branch of the Communist Party in October, 1988, the silver-haired former hydro-electric engineer must have seemed to him an example of the new type of freethinking, energetic reformer who might be able to rebuild the party's shattered legitimacy in the republic.

The irony is that 15 months later he seems to be succumbing in that aim at the cost of splitting with Moscow. The Lithuanian Communists have soared in popularity while the latest poll shows Sajudis, the nationalist movement, slipping back in public esteem. About six weeks before crucial legislative elections, the poll shows that Mr Brazauskas is the most popular politician in the republic.

In becoming that, he has created for Mr Gorbachov the most serious constitutional crisis of his five years in power. To his credit, Mr Brazauskas's party is to invite party leaders from Estonia to Georgia to follow suit and declare in

dependence; to resist means of going against the 82 per cent of Lithuanians who approve of the split. Mr Brazauskas's remarkable popularity — one poll as far afield as the Ukrainian city of Lwow last year ranked him second only to the late Andrei Sakharov, the human rights campaigner — is a tribute to the sometimes courageous way he has disengaged himself from a lifetime of party discipline to embrace the national cause.

Born in Rokiškis, Lithuania, in 1932 — he is a year younger than Mr Gorbachov — Mr Brazauskas joined the party in 1959. Like the Soviet leader, he spent decades rising patiently through the apparatus, serving as Minister for Construction Materials and later as Secretary for Economic Affairs.

He showed himself prepared for change, however, when Mr Gorbachov's reforms opened the floodgates to an unexpected revival of nationalism. In July, 1988, as the first demonstrators took to the streets of Vilnius, to press

for independence, he was the only high-ranking Communist official brave enough to address the crowds.

Three months later, Interior Ministry troops violently suppressed a mass meeting in the

Vilnius cathedral to prevent the pro-independence rally. Mr Brazauskas was边缘化 ever closer towards separation, arresting and injuring many. In the ensuing furor, Mr Ringaudas Songaila resigned as party leader and Mr Brazauskas was chosen to replace him — an appointment clearly made at the insistence of Mr Gorbachov.

The Soviet President had

Thursday's six-hour meeting in the Kremlin he made the historic gesture of presenting Mr Gorbachov with a plan and a timetable for Lithuanian independence. The very fact that Mr Gorbachov apparently listened to such a plan has pushed him "across a certain bridge", according to Mr Suziedelis.

Back home in Vilnius, Mr Brazauskas is admired for his steadiness of purpose, according to an emigre who remains in close contact with the republic. "Having made a decision, he does not go back on it. He is like a buffer: you push him in front of something and he just takes all the blows," he said.

A towering, barrel-chested former yachtsman, Mr Brazauskas strikes visitors as sincere and down-to-earth.

Some, observing the spirited national democrat who has emerged from a dull Brezhnev chrysalis, wonder how deep his new convictions lie and whether some of the apparent jockeying with Moscow might be merely for show.

By one account, at least

Bering Strait feels benefit of thaw in the Cold War

From Martin Fletcher, Washington

The thaw in superpower relations is being felt even in the frozen wastes of Alaska and Siberia. In Washington this week, US and Soviet officials announced that they had agreed to establish an international park spanning the Bering Strait.

A joint feasibility study by the National Parks Service of the two nations, said the purpose would be "to promote the protection, understanding and enjoyment of the common heritage of Beringia", at the region of icebound wilderness on both sides of the narrow strip of sea known.

Beringian natives would be able to resume ancient historical and cultural links disrupted by the Cold War. Wildlife managers will be able to track walrus, birds and other animals which migrate between the countries. Natural historians and scientists need

to hop the 30 miles from Alaska to Siberia for research purposes will no longer have to travel via Moscow.

The US has proposed an existing 2.8 million-acre nature preserve as its contribution to the "Arctic Park", and

the Russians intend to match that. Each country would supervise its half, but there would be regular meetings of the park managers and they would establish a joint "centre for research and public information".

Announcing that they had accepted the recommendation

of the joint feasibility study, Mr Manuel Lujan, the US Secretary of the Interior, and Mr V.G. Sokolovsky, deputy chairman of the Soviet State Committee for Protection of the Environment, said they wanted the park established in the near future.

Legislation will be required

to create the artificial twentieth-century division of two regions, whose links date back to the existence of an ice Age land bridge.

Even when that was covered by the sea, said the feasibility study, "common life in Beringia continued without interruption for thousands of years. Even under the flag of the Russian Empire, and later during American and Russian commercial whaling periods, people, ideas and goods moved across the sea."

"But the flow of culture and ideas, which could not be stemmed by the submergence of the land bridge, was disrupted by the tide of politics."

There have been recent signs of rapprochement. Visa restrictions have been relaxed for Alaskans and Siberian natives wishing to visit relatives. Bering Air has begun charter flights between Nome in Alaska and the Siberian city of Provideniya.

Report of Spring

January 11 1990

PARLIAMENT

Pay deals worrying Thatcher

After the unions' rejection of the 10.2 per cent Ford pay offer, Mrs Margaret Thatcher told MPs at question time that the movement of wage costs was very disturbing. Jobs were at risk, she said, quoting figures showing better containment of wage costs by Britain's main competitors.

Mr John Marshall (Hendon South, C) had said that "irresponsible" wage claims unrelated to productivity would, if granted, lead to higher inflation, the erosion in value of savings and the destruction of jobs.

Labour MPs: What about the free market?

Mrs Thatcher said that Mr Marshall was right. "If our wage costs rise faster than those of our competitors, our competitors will get the orders and the jobs. The movement of wage costs is very disturbing."

The last available figures, in the second or third quarter last year, showed that UK wage costs were up by 6 per cent.

In the United States, they were up by 2 per cent and, in West Germany, by 1 per cent. They were down in Japan by 1 per cent, in France by 3 per cent and in The Netherlands by 4 per cent.

"That means that those concerned

with getting orders and jobs here must have a very careful look to keep wage costs down."

Mr Neil Kinnock, Leader of the Opposition: Would she tell us how far she is prepared to blame herself and her Government's policy for the rate of inflation?

Mrs Thatcher: We have made it quite clear that there was too much money in the system for the output that we were having and, therefore, that steps have to be taken to correct it and are being taken.

She said that the present rate of inflation—at 7.6 or 7.7 per cent—was, for the last Labour Government, so low that they had ambitions to get down to it.

Mr Kinnock: When is the Government's deliberate policy to keep mortgage rates and interest rates very high, to increase electricity and fares and also to impose, very shortly, both the business rate and the poll tax, is not the Director General of the CBI (Mr John Blaikie) absolutely right to say that inflation is the fault of the Government? (Labour cheers.)

Mrs Thatcher: No. Inflation happens when we have too much money in the system (Labour protests). It means that we are taking more out in

PRIME MINISTER

money than we are putting in in output.

That has to be corrected by two means. One, by interest rates and the other, by keeping a tight fiscal policy.

We are doing both.

Mr Terence Higgins (Worthing, C): Could she comment on the rather old-fashioned attitude of some trade union leaders who have not learnt the lessons of 1979-80? Moreover, will she reject the view that increased productivity automatically justifies a pay increase, since it may be that productivity is going up in an industry where demand is going down?

Mrs Thatcher: I agree. The first rule is that wage increases must not outstrip productivity.

As he points out, increased productivity also comes from substantially increased investment of capital, and then there must be a return on capital, and also it could be that increased productivity causes price reductions, so that the consumer is entitled to get some reductions if they (industries) are to stay competitive.

Mr David Howell (Guildford, C)

said Mrs Thatcher, given her determination to defeat inflation, what she thought about the idea supported by the Governor, the deputy governor and the former deputy governor of the Bank of England that there should be placed on the Bank the statutory obligation to maintain the value of the pound.

Mrs Thatcher: That should remain part of the Government's duty. We have to achieve it by keeping the money supply tight.

Mr Dale Campbell-Savours (Workington, Lab) said that if Mrs Thatcher's policy was to increase interest and mortgage rates, it was obvious that people at work would demand higher and higher wages to pay for those higher interest rates.

Is it her view that there is now no alternative to that strategy? If it is, it means wage-demand escalation.

"Or is it?", he added, "that she has some other secret policy that she is unwilling to disclose to the House, some informal incomes policy based on the threat of higher and higher unemployment?"

Mrs Thatcher: Wage costs and wage claims and their settlement are matters for industry. One would hope that they would take into account that if wage

costs price them out of the market, they price themselves out of jobs. She said that the alternative to the correct policies to deal with inflation by interest rates and tight fiscal policy was to let inflation rip.

Mr David Porter (Waveney, C): As we are still to some extent a nation of shopkeepers, and as she was brought up above the shop, as I was, what message has she for small businesses and shopkeepers worried about uniform business rate? (Labour cheers.)

Mrs Thatcher said that the amount raised from business rate next year would be the same as this plus inflation, so there would be no real increase. (Labour laughter.)

There had been changes: the first rating revaluation since 1973, which had given rise to nearly three-quarters of the increase in rates.

"That is an object lesson to anyone who wanted to apply it to domestic rating."

There was to be a transition period of at least five years during which the increase would be no more than 20 per cent for larger businesses and no more than 15 per cent for smaller businesses. It was the first time that business would have had assurance about its rates.

Diseased meat 'not entering the food chain'

AGRICULTURE

Suggestions that meat from cows infected by bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) was entering the human food chain were dismissed as "absolute nonsense" by Mr David MacLean, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, during question time.

He rejected a request by Mr Anthony Stenn (South Hams, C) that the Government should review the level of compensation for farmers whose herds were infected by the disease.

"We believe that 50 per cent of the value of the animal as if it were healthy is fair compensation for an animal which is terminally ill and therefore worthless."

Mr Steve Green said that there were similarities between neurological wasting diseases of the human brain and BSE, and it was known that the disease in sheep was passed on to cows, although there was no evidence that it could be passed on to humans.

Why was the Government not encouraging farmers by giving them the incentive to report cows suffering from the early stages of the disease so that they could not be, as was happening in North Yorkshire and Northamptonshire, reach the markets for sale?

Mr Michael Portman denied that was the case. "We have so many safety nets and braces on this operation it is just not true."

Ninety-nine per cent of all infected animals have been caught at the farm stage. Officials are then removed, isolating the brain and spinal cord which could contain BSE, from all animals. Veterinary services are doing special checks of markets.

"So there is no prospect of meat infected by BSE getting into the food chain. You do that by cutting out all officials."

People call this mad-cow disease, whereas the central nervous system. These officials are removed from all cows whether they have BSE or not."

Egg-test scheme 'against EC law'

AGRICULTURE

It would violate European Community law to delay egg imports for testing. Mr John Gummer, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, said at questions.

He accused Dr David Clark, chief Opposition spokesman on agriculture, of misleading people by claiming that it could be done.

Mr Andrew Stewart (Sherwood, C) had said that the methods of checking food imports proposed by the Labour Party, which involved detaining food until it went bad, would be illegal under EC law.

Mr Gummer said that Dr Clark's statement that Labour would hold up food imports for testing was wholly contrary to EC law.

Dr Clark challenged Mr Gummer to deny that a clause in the EC legislation allowed him to prohibit contaminated food entering Britain if public health would be at risk.

Salmonella-contaminated eggs had been found coming into the country from The Netherlands. In the four days waiting for the test results the contaminated eggs had been sent for sale. Why were there two standards—one for British eggs and one for imports?

To Conservative cheers, Mr Gummer said that British eggs were healthier than anyone else's because Britain had tougher laws than any other EC country. Dr Clark should be asked for information on the people. He knew that what he said was wholly contrary to EC law.

Mr Ian Bruce (South Dorset, C) said that much of the control over the EC trade was required because health regulations in the rest of the EC were not up to those of Britain. It seemed wrong that British egg farmers had taken such stringent measures to get rid of salmonella had such training.

Concern over conference police costs

By Nigel Williamson
Political Staff

The Government should pay the full costs of policing and security at party conferences, the Labour backbencher, Mr Peter Pike, said in an adjournment debate last night.

At present, the additional costs are shared equally by the Home Office and the local police authority and represent a particular problem for the local authority which hosts the Gov-

ernment party's conference. Costs have risen sharply since the Grand Hotel bomb at the Conservative Party conference in Brighton in 1984.

The additional policing costs in Blackpool for the Tory conference last October totalled £1,080,000 and estimates for this year's conference, due to be held in Bournemouth, already suggest that the figure could exceed £2 million. Costs for opposition parties are far lower and security at the Labour Party

conference in Brighton last year totalled no more than an additional £4,000.

Mr Pike also expressed concerns that the security requirements of party conferences took police officers away from the surrounding locality. His own constituency, Burnley, in Lancashire, had suffered in this way for many years at the time of Blackpool conferences, he said.

Mr Pike dismissed the argument that party conferences brought little to a town and

therefore it was fair that the local authority bore a share of the costs. Blackpool would be full at that time of year anyway, and did not need party conferences to ensure the town's prosperity, he said.

The Home Office said yesterday that all local police authorities had their own special requirements, whether it was party conferences, pop concerts or football matches. There was no argument for treating conference costs differently.

Parliament next week

The main business in the House of Commons next week is expected to be:

Monday: Environmental Protection Bill, second reading.

Tuesday: Coal Industry Bill, remaining stages.

Wednesday: Debate on parliamentary pensions. Pensions Bill, remaining stages. Private Bills: Hythe Marina Village (Southampton) Wavescreen Bill and Isle of Wight Bill, Lords amendments.

Thursday: Motion on central government financial support for English local authorities.

Friday: Private member's motion on Opposition policies.

The main business in the House of Lords is expected to be:

Monday: Food Safety Bill, committee, first day.

Tuesday: Courts and Legal Services Bill, committee, first day.

Wednesday: Debates on German reunification and on tax relief on contributions to private health insurance.

Thursday: Food Safety Bill, committee, second day.

Parliament today

Commons (9.30): Debate on the future of the multi-fibre arrangement.

Business questions

Rebuke for Labour MP

A complaint that Mr Dale Campbell-Savours (Workington, Lab) had made a renewed attempt today to raise allegations about the possible business connections of a minister, Mr Michael Forsyth, was made in the Commons.

Mr Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke, C) said that Mr Campbell-Savours had made the fresh attempt, again in the standing committee considering the National Health Service and Community Care Bill, and had been ruled out of order by the chairman.

Was it in order for an MP to do this again when the allegations had been denied by the minister, because this was tantamount to saying that the minister was a liar?

The Speaker (Mr Bernard Weatherill) said he hoped that what Mr Bennett had said was not true in view of the solemn undertaking given by Mr Campbell-Savours to the House on Tuesday. (This was after Mr Campbell-Savours made his first attempt to bring up the matter in the committee that morning.)

That had led to the Leader of the House (Sir Geoffrey Howe) withdrawing his motion to give

the chairman of the committee power to suspend any MP at further sittings, the Speaker said.

He did not think that Mr Campbell-Savours should persist in this conduct.

Earlier, Mr Campbell-Savours, on a point of order, had asked during business questions that Mr Forsyth should make a personal statement to the House to answer the question whether, when he was no longer a minister, he intended to return to the office of Michael Forsyth Ltd. When he did so, the matter would be finished.

Sir Geoffrey Howe, Leader of the House, said Mr Forsyth had done his best to answer the allegations made under cover of parliamentary privilege. If the minister was as important as Mr Campbell-Savours stated, he might take the opportunity to raise it outside that cover.

Mr Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle, C) said that Mr Campbell-Savours should not use the privilege of the House to indulge in McCathyism smears against Mr Forsyth, who had given a clear assurance there was nothing in them.

The committee on televising the Commons was investigating the efficiency of the microphone system in the Chamber. Sir Geoffrey Howe, Leader of the House, said during business questions.

His remarks came immediately after Prime Minister's question time when a number of MPs complained that they could not hear Mrs Thatcher.

Mr David Howell (Guildford, C) told Sir Geoffrey that, although some MPs might be getting older and dearer, the acoustics in the Chamber were undoubtedly becoming considerably worse. Ministers were having some difficulty in making themselves heard. There had been a definite deterioration.

Sir Geoffrey said that he was not sure that there had been a deterioration but a number of MPs had brought the matter to his attention.

He was advised that the problem was the consequence of the antiquity of the microphone system. The televising experiment had been authorized to proceed with the existing acoustic equipment.

The committee on televising the Commons was looking at what should be done to modernize the acoustic equipment.

Pressure grows for health service inspectors

By Sheila Gunn, Political Reporter

Mr Kenneth Clarke, Secretary of State for Health, faces pressure to set up a network of independent inspectors to check on standards and quality of health care.

The Royal College of Nursing is winning strong support from other health care bodies and MPs, including many Conservatives, for a health watchdog modelled on the national inspectors who monitor schools, pollution, water quality, gas and telephone services.

An amendment, drafted by the college, to the Government's health and community care reforms legislation is due to be debated next Tuesday during the committee stage scrutiny in the Commons.

Mr Clarke opposes the idea, but many MPs believe it would help to reassure

patients and other constituents who fear that the big National Health Service reforms will lead to lower standards.

The Secretary of State proposes that local authorities should set up independent inspection units. However, the royal college argues that it will mean councils being both "gatekeeper and panacea" as providers and users of services.

Therefore, in order to ensure a high quality of standards of care, the college wishes to see an independent, nationally funded inspectorate, working at local level to monitor the care that is delivered by the private, the voluntary and the public sectors.

The amendment would cover all health and social care facilities including National Health Service and private hospitals and clinics, health centres and GPs' practices

and nursing homes. The royal college's working party recommended that teams of inspectors with health or social work qualifications should be established under a national director.

The teams would:

- check that conditions of registration are met;
- make regular visits to monitor standards;
- make reports and keep records on each facility;
- give advice to managers on standards and training.

Care standards and guidelines would not only reflect physical and environmental factors but should also aim to outline specific standards in areas such as leisure activities for residents, recreation, spiritual needs, skill mix, treatment plan, therapies, etc., the college suggests.

That had led to the Leader of the House (Sir Geoffrey Howe) withdrawing his motion to give

the select committee on

Troops leave Tiananmen Square as Chinese leadership begins talks on Hong Kong

Two held as police keep wary eye on the Peking crowd

From Seth Faison, Peking

At least two people were detained by police for disrupting the peace yesterday in Tiananmen Square, marring the full reopening of central Peking that followed the lifting of martial law.

After all but a few armed police marched out of the square early yesterday, plain clothes officers replaced them and filtered through the crowd of tourists, kite-flyers and curiosity-seekers all day.

They appeared to be under orders to prevent any show of opposition to the Government, including attempts to mourn those who were killed during the crackdown on protesters last June.

The Monument to the Revolutionary Martyrs, an obelisk in the centre of the square that served as a command post for the democracy movement last year, was cordoned off and six armed police stood guard round it.

In the morning, a university student arrived carrying large rolls of posters he wanted to display in the square. As the police began to close in, the student walked away. "Putting up the posters would be like sacrificing myself for nothing," he said. Onlookers stared silently at a notice-board proclaiming the monument out of bounds. Pasting up posters, shouting slogans, sleeping on the ground and laying wreaths in the area were forbidden, it added.

In the afternoon, witnesses saw an elderly man in a worn, blue Mao jacket carried away by plainclothes police after he shouted at soldiers: "How many people did you kill?" "The living are dead and the dead will return," the man yelled defiantly, as police escorted him inside the Museum of Revolutionary History, where soldiers or armed police are believed to be stationed in

Peking and surrounding areas would be maintained to help Public Security officials keep social order.

From early morning, people watched workmen removing barricades to widen access to the square and lined up to have their pictures taken by professional photographers.

Shortly before noon up to 1,000 troops camped in the history museum since June marched across the square, chanting and singing military songs. They disappeared into a walled compound near the Great Hall of the People.

"I thought martial law was over," said one of the several thousand people strolling around the square as he watched the soldiers go by.

Mr Yuan denied that any of the officers in the museum were from the People's Liberation Army. "You are wrong. All the soldiers have left," he said. Mr Yuan said the timing of the lifting of martial law was not tied to any specific event but was aimed at improving the capital's mood as the lunar new year approached.

Asked if the lifting of martial law meant that the dispute over Mr Fang Lizhi, the dissident astrophysicist, who took refuge in the US Embassy last year, might also be settled, Mr Yuan let the Foreign Ministry spokesman answer. Mr Jin repeated earlier statements that the Fang question required efforts from both China and the US. "The only way out" was for Mr Fang to plead guilty immediately.

Asked about the fate of Mr Zhao Ziyang, the former Communist Party leader, Mr Yuan said that Mr Zhao's case was still under investigation, and that he was living "a normal life" in Peking with his family.

"I have said in Guangzhou (in November), concerning Sino-British and Sino-Hong Kong relations, that it is time we should have a clear sky after the rain."

A serious-looking Sir David was taken aback by Mr Li's remarks. In response, he pointed to the need to "distinguish between a small shower of rain and a typhoon and not to get confused with the two".

Sir David said: "I'm not an expert on weather forecasts."

But we are almost at the end of the winter and spring is coming round. We'd like to be in the period of spring weather."

Mr Li chimed in: "Small showers of rain will become typhoons if they are not given immediate attention. That is what we have to work hard to prevent - further rain."

The exchange, clearly referring to Hong Kong pro-democracy activities which China has branded as subversive, erupted during a photo call before formal talks between Mr Li and Sir David at the Diaoyutai guesthouse.

"I have said in Guangzhou (in November), concerning Sino-British and Sino-Hong Kong relations, that it is time we should have a clear sky after the rain."

Mr Li, deputy director of the



Sir David Wilson, the Governor of Hong Kong, at a news conference in Peking yesterday with a smiling Mr Zhou Nan, China's Deputy Foreign Minister.

Stormy words darken Governor's visit

From Chris Young, Peking

State Council's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, was referring to a protest march organized by the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of the Patriotic Democratic Movement in China on New Year's Day outside the New China News Agency's headquarters in Happy Valley.

More than 10,000 protesters chanted slogans such as "Down with the Ceausescus in China" and "Down with the Deng-Li-Yang clique".

In Hong Kong last night an organizer of the New Year's Day march, Mr Lau Chin-shak, said there was "neither heavy rain nor strong wind, but only spring showers which will nourish the land".

Mr Li's attack on the Alliance, chaired by Mr Szeto Wah, the Hong Kong legislator, indicated that differences still remain over the Government's handling of pro-democracy activities in the territory.

The Hong Kong Govern-

ment has maintained that the territory has never been used as a base for subversion against China.

But Peking apparently fears that a quicker pace of democratic reforms would open the way for liberals who are closely associated with the Alliance to dominate the future Special Administrative Region Government.

The Basic Law Drafting Committee, on which China holds the majority, has tentatively confined the number of directly elected seats to the legislature in 1997 to 18, or 30 per cent of the Assembly.

Emerging from yesterday's three-hour talks with Mr Li and another Chinese official, Mr Lu Ping, Sir David remained tight-lipped on whether he had put forward a more liberal political model.

He would only say: "We've had a very useful and practical discussion on a number of matters of mutual concern, including discussion on the

Basic Law and the progress in drafting."

"The discussion was held in a good atmosphere... I'd like to leave the details at the end of the series of discussions."

Mr Li, on the other hand, would only say that he had briefed Sir David on the decisions and amendments made by the Basic Law Drafting Committee's sub-groups during their recent sessions.

He emphasized, however, that he believed that differences could be narrowed through dialogue.

"Over the past few years, we had been keeping constant contact which was beneficial to both sides. We hope that in the near-future we can restore such close contact," said Mr Li.

Sir David agreed and said that discussions would help to re-establish a constructive dialogue to deal with practical issues facing the territory. (South China Morning Post)

Leading article, page 15

WORLD ROUNDUP

Moscow boost to Gulf peace hope

A breakthrough appeared to have been achieved yesterday in the long-running quest for a peace settlement after the Gulf War, when Iraq joined Iran in agreeing to a Soviet offer of mediation (Hazhir Teimourian writes). The prospects seemed bright for a lasting peace for the first time since the two countries stopped fighting in August 1988.

The Soviet offer was announced on Wednesday. Mr Gennadi Gerasimov, the Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman, said the initiative had been agreed with Señor Javier Pérez de Cuellar, the UN Secretary-General, and did not mean "any substitution for the UN peace efforts in the region". The indication was that the initiative had been some time in preparation and the Soviet Union believed there was a good chance of success. Talks will be held in Moscow between the Iranian and Iraqi foreign ministers.

Row over Kashmir

Delhi - Relations between Pakistan and the new Indian Government have soured amid an angry exchange of words over escalating violence in the Kashmir Valley, most of which has been placed under a shoot-on-sight curfew (Christopher Thomas writes).

Pakistan yesterday attacked Indian "distortions" of its alleged role in fanning trouble in the valley, and warned that blaming Pakistan for what was happening was "potentially very dangerous". Earlier, Indian government officials quoted Mr Vishwanath Pratap Singh, the Prime Minister, as cautioning Islamabad not to support armed Kashmiri secessionists, because "such things become difficult to manage if allowed to grow".

Soviet rig in trouble

Oslo (Reuter) - A gale carried a Soviet oil rig close to the Norwegian coast early yesterday and Norwegian helicopters flew 16 of the 23 crew to safety. Mr Kjell Larsen, leader of the rescue team, said four Soviet tugs were holding the Kolskaya rig steady about 1,000 yards from shore near the northern town of Vannoyen. "The situation is under control," he said, adding that the remaining members of the crew "will not be evacuated unless the situation worsens".

The Kolskaya, the first Soviet rig that was intended to be used in the Norwegian sector of the North Sea, was being towed by tugs from the Soviet port of Murmansk to Stavanger in western Norway when the wind and heavy seas swept it towards the coast.

Picasso works stolen

Antibes, France - Thieves have stolen 80 ceramic works by Pablo Picasso worth two million francs (£210,000) from the French Riviera workshop where the artist worked for 40 years, police said yesterday (Reuter reports). The robbers broke through a window of the workshop in Vallauris, near here, on the night of December 28-29 when the gallery was closed for the new year holiday. They carted away the 80 pieces, including decorated plates, serving dishes and pots, in a lorry, police said.

Saudis deny torture

Saudi Arabia yesterday denied that it held any political prisoners or used torture to extract confessions (Michael Knappe writes). The denial was in response to an Amnesty International report published yesterday that cited evidence of systematic human rights violations, including the use of torture, in the kingdom in recent years. The report detailed the cases of 66 detainees, one of whom died in custody. The Saudi Press Agency described it as "inaccurate, exaggerated and based on accounts that should not be believed".

Massacre inquiry

Nairobi - The Sudanese military junta has set up a committee to investigate the death last month of hundreds, possibly thousands, of southern tribespeople in central Sudan (Marti Colley writes). Diplomats say at least 600 of the Nilot Shukuk people, including women and children, were killed by the Muslim Shabab tribe in riots at El-Jebelat at the end of December. The ruling Revolutionary Council claims 214 people were killed and 38 wounded; the Sudan People's Liberation Army puts the death toll at more than 2,000.

Mayor's mouth brings him more trouble

From Susan Elliott, Washington

A sign outside the Bottom Line bar in central Washington on Wednesday said it all for critics of the city's mayor: "Surprise. The Mayor is innocent again."

It was the second day in a row that the establishment, which hangs up a newsworthy slogan each day, had focused on Mr Marion Barry and the latest controversy surrounding him as he prepares to run for a fourth term in office. "Mr Mayor," it warned, "you're getting messy with Jesse."

The week has been tough for Mr Barry, already under siege from repeated allegations of corruption and cocaine abuse. In the latest of a long series of critical profiles in the national press, The Los Angeles Times last weekend quoted him as ridiculing any aspirations the Rev Jesse Jackson might have for mayor.

Musing as to why his second wife still loves him after media accounts of his alleged infidelities, Mr Barry concluded it was because he was good in bed. "I was good then. I'm even better now," the paper reported.

He was also quoted as describing as "Judas" the former fund-raisers who abandoned him and talked to the media.

"Jews too!" he is reported to have said. "Jews should be the last to spread rumours. They've been persecuted themselves. You'd think they'd know better." The remarks were interpreted as

anti-Semitic by Barry critics.

The mayor told The Los Angeles Times in a letter that he was "shocked" when he read the profile.

The comments, Mr Barry's

protests and the newspaper's defence of its article have filled national media all week and provided further ammunition for Mr Barry's polarized supporters and critics.

The editor of the respected West Coast newspaper, Mr Shelby Coffey, said he stood by the article and that the reporter taped the comments as Mr Barry sipped wine in one of his favourite city bars.

The article depicted Mr Barry as a vain and arrogant politician who, when relaxed, uses crude language and makes fun of allegations that he indulges in cocaine and chases women. In addition, it described him lecturing schoolchildren against drug use.

Mr Barry has accused the reporter, Bella Stumbo, of being apologetic. "While I am admittedly not the best enunciator

in the world, I do not use the 'black dialect' she chose to attribute to me," he told the newspaper's editor in a letter.

Mr Jackson, who moved to the Washington district from Chicago last year, played down the reported comments and said Mr Barry assured him they were not true.

Privately, however, a source of his was quoted in The Washington Post as saying he believed the newspaper had accurately quoted the mayor.

Mr Jackson's move raised speculation that he might run for mayor and win because Mr Barry has come under increasing criticism for the way he runs the city and for details of his private life. Mr Jackson has denied he intends to run.

Observers say that even the liberal white and poor black voters who brought Mr Barry to power have started to lose patience with him. But The Los Angeles Times found Mr Barry confident of his chances of re-election.

"I'll get 65 per cent of the vote, at least," the article quoted him as saying. "Isn't anybody in this town can beat me. I'm invincible." The newspaper also quoted him as boasting of his sexual prowess and dismissing a plan to use him as a conspiracy among white detractors, especially the mainstream press.

"I'm gonna be like that lion the Romans had - they can keep throwin' their stuff at me you know, but I'll be kickin' their asses, every time in the end, I sit in there, lickin' my paws."

Stumbo, aged 46, has worked at The Los Angeles Times for 18 years and is renowned for her perseverance in tracking prominent figures and extracting embarrassing comments from them as they relax their public image.

A Californian official, who fell prey in 1981, explained her technique this week in The Washington Post. "She's an incredibly charming person. People like me and Marion Barry, with egos the size of a room, she knows how to play that. And that's your fault if you're a grown man."

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FRIDAY PAGE

'The moral relativism shown in satanizing Noriega seems more obscene and dangerous than his activities'

About 10 days ago I was in America watching television as a stern-looking American official took some journalists on a tour of the compound of General Manuel Noriega. "Noriega," he told the cameras, "was known to have consort and availed himself of prostitutes." It's quite peculiar the way some people speak, like police officers who never "stop" a suspect but "apprehend" them.

Then the camera swivelled around some beige rooms, which were described as evidence of the "pretty extravagant lifestyle that we have uncovered". There was a quick shot of a rather ordinary looking bucket, said to have blood in it for satanic rites of some sort. "We uncovered pornography and a substantial amount of cocaine," the official said. I believe they mentioned a bit of Hitler memorabilia and then a screening room and videos. One could hear America's shudder.

What is all this about, I wondered. At the time, Noriega was on the lam, he hadn't even turned up in the Vatican Embassy.

What seems certain was there the television cameras, appearing to be in the position of the murderer scene they had seen a awareness of the story and more importantly, elicited a singular version of it in the public mind. The film became a movie — and popular movies and endings of the audience are not educated.

The more likely true end to the story is not the most simple with the insurance policies of almost \$75,000, books not starting a restaurant because it has been discovered at the same moment.

Like the central figure in The Drunken Novel in America, Charles Stuart wanted to turn his life around and expand his horizons, pregnant with ideas.

But the legend will not stop. Father Dugger has asked his biography to be written one day on a former to speculate what the story can be. With luck and hard work can come a new life.

She has good cause. After Princess Victoria, Prince Albert and Margot Asquith, her

It was true that there had been a steady drum roll in America over the past six months as Noriega went from simply being a nasty little pock-marked thug into a monster kingpin in America's drug crisis. It was rather Orwellian, watching the campaign of hate. One day he was America's ally and then, all of a sudden, his face was the one responsible for turning America's schools and ghettos into crack houses.

As dictators go, Noriega was neither the best nor the worst. But the action of the United States in invading a sovereign nation, even one hijacked by a nasty little dictator, is a dubious matter at best and required some very fast talking. The result is that Noriega has been elevated from a horrid snitch to a fully fledged devil.

In turning Noriega into Lucifer, the Americans chose to concentrate on the general's home-life which, to put it mildly, is vulnerable. Americans are a puritanical lot and they expect heads of state to have uncomplicated and healthy love lives. Even before Mrs Reagan's book, we all knew

that Nancy adored Ronnie. During the Carter presidency we suffered through the syrup of Jimmy, Rosalind, and their frightened daughter Amy. I heard more than I ever wanted to about how much Jerry Ford stood by Betty while her various ailments were exorcised. It turns out that President John F. Kennedy consorted with a lot of women while married, even the odd gangster's moll, but he is the exception that proves the rule.

Noriega, on the other hand, seems to have been a head of state who came complete with wife, mistress, prostitutes and a personal drug habit. Pornography, drugs and prostitutes aren't. I would venture, news among many of the death spots of the world today, never mind seven million American homes. As for his alleged voodoo rituals, well, they may be irrational but then so are the sacraments of the Church of England. The really damning charge, I think, is the notion now put about that the general may be a bisexual connoisseur of young boys.

Still, even given the level of



BARBARA AMIEL

concern in America about child abuse, I'm not sure that is sufficient reason to invade his country. As for the cocaine charges against him, drug dealing is a nasty business, but it might have been more useful to have invaded Colombia or Cuba if eliminating cocaine was the issue. For my money, the moral relativism

shown in satanizing Noriega seems more obscene and dangerous to me than his activities.

Alas for Noriega, he was an unprotected animal. The reasons President Bush gave for his actions against him — the protection of American interests, the flouting of democracy by Noriega, his activities in the drug trade — may all be true. But when it comes to American interests, Fidel Castro is a thousand times more inimical. He has supported a world-wide terrorist industry and has most certainly been involved in drugs. But oddly, Castro's communism has kept him protected both by the power of the Soviet Union and an unlikely domestic alliance in America of left-wing church groups and organizations.

There was no equivalent support structure for the pock-marked little general.

Mind you, I'd find the notion of the United States invading Cuba as dubious as its action in Panama, although I don't belong to that school of thought that sees a parallel between the invasion of Panama by the United States and

that of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union. There is no parallel between a great democracy using force to save or restore a democracy and a powerful tyranny using force to save or impose a tyranny. The will of the people is the only source of political legitimacy and it follows that democracy is the only legitimate form of government. All the same, while tyrannies may not carry political legitimacy, they are still sovereign entities and other nations can't just move in and impose governments on them, even "better" or more legitimate governments.

The Romanians didn't create a demonology around Ceausescu. Nor, unlike the United States' plans for the general, did they really bother with the presence of a trial. Mad dogs are shot on sight. Putting them in the dock only tarnishes the court. "We won't stand, dear," were Elena's last recorded words. "General Noriega respectfully refuses to submit to the jurisdiction of this court," was the response of the little snitch's lawyer in Miami. President Bush should have learnt from the Romanians.

First ladies of feminism



Emily Davies (left) was fighting for the education of women long before the suffragettes made their name. Libby Purves met the writer intent on winning greater esteem for this early feminist



Fighting fit: Daphne Bennett dislikes today's emphasis on the mystical earth-motherish ideal

Daphne Bennett is slight and white-haired, and when we met she was accompanied by her husband (the retired president of Magdalen College, Ralph Bennett) and by a stout shooting-stick. "I am not disabled, but I was mugged once and I dislike being alone after dark." It would, however, be a grave mistake to think her fluffy. This is an historian with a passionate regard for original sources and a very combative streak: it was she who brought — and won — the famous lawsuit against Prince Michael of Kent for plagiarism. Now, equally implacable, she is preaching a fervent doctrine of dissent over the history of the feminist movement.

She has good cause. After

Princess Victoria, Prince Albert and Margot Asquith, her

latest biographical subject is an almost forgotten heroine: Emily Davies, the founder of the first women's college, Girton. If you dare to confuse her with Emily Davison, the suffragette who threw herself under the King's horse, Bennett will see the. Quite justifiably: her Emily had, after all, been plugging away in the cause of women's liberation for 50 years before the suffragettes. What is more, Emily Davies would never have dreamed of doing anything so unconstructive as jumping under a racehorse. "She was careful never to alienate men. If men held the power, she realized she must not make them feel small."

Virtually all modern feminist writers infuriate Bennett to the point of incoherence. "Simone de Beauvoir says that feminism in England was 'very timid' until 1903 and the whole issue of women's edu-

cation." As for Germaine Greer — goodness, that woman spouts the most awful rubbish — she has carried on this stupid idea that nothing happened until those ill-advised suffragettes! Above all, she rages at the modish idea that the women's movement began in the 1960s. Sara Maitland wrote that it began somewhere between the death of Marilyn Monroe and that of Janis Joplin. That is an insult to earlier women, and especially to Emily."

Her quarrel with modern feminism is not only about its origins; it is qualitative, too.

She greatly dislikes what she sees as an unhealthy emphasis

on women's physiological characteristics, the mystical matrarchial earth-motherish ideal.

"There is an ignorant neglect of minds, and of the

whole issue of women's edu-

cation." For her, as for Emily Davies a century earlier, education is at the core of the whole issue.

Reading the biography, one is swept into this way of thinking. Emily Davies was born in 1830, a cleric's daughter. Her upbringing was kindly but caged: she was refused a part in her brothers' lessons. They were going to Oxford, you see. She was to stay at home with her Mamma. Now, you see, her mother was "one young lady, the only married man with daughters would be suitable for the sensitive job of examining these frail creatures. At the last moment, Cambridge grudgingly agreed to try it."

When her father moved to Gateshead, however, Emily found an antidote to dullness.

With unworlly innocence,

right to her biographer's own

generation: "Women are not

she was brought up by two sweet, kind uncles. She went to school but they simply couldn't swallow the idea of her going to Girton. You see, for women like this there was just no hope."

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'As for Germaine Greer, she has carried on this stupid idea that nothing happened until those ill-advised suffragettes!'

devices, and the 11-year-old roamed the town, fascinated by the slums. She visited bawds, saw starvation, birth and death, learnt about sex and incest, and angrily took note of the pale women who worked to fulfil term of pregnancy and came home to light the fire and deal with crying children, while their husbands sat slumped in a chair.

All this she candidly described in later life: but her rare and central gift was that, unlike dreamier feminists of her day, she was able to see a clear continuum between the safe, dull, overprotected life of the young lady and the bestial poverty of working-class women. Education, she firmly decided, was the answer to it all: to fit women for better things. It became her mission.

In the 1860s, when the Local Examinations were started, she campaigned for girls to be eligible as well as boys: it is difficult to comprehend the horror this aroused. Male academics said that the girls would collapse, having smaller heads than boys, and that only married men with daughters would be suitable for the sensitive job of examining these frail creatures. At the last moment, Cambridge grudgingly agreed to try it.

When her father moved to Gateshead, however, Emily found an antidote to dullness. With unworlly innocence, her mother left her to her own

healthy. It is a rare thing to meet with a lady who does not suffer from headaches, languor, hysteria or some illness showing a want of stamina.

Dullness is not healthy . . .

Men think dullness is calm. If they had ever tried what it is to be a young lady, they would know better."

"Very true," Bennett says. "You see why I have a passion for her?"

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SPECTRUM

The race murder that wasn't

Conservative Boston has been rocked by a seemingly clear-cut case of racial violence, made all the more shocking by on-the-spot media coverage, which turned out to be something else altogether. Peter Stothard reports

The story of Charles and Carol Stuart is the most haunting event for Massachusetts since the assassination of John F. Kennedy, a popular Boston columnist wrote this week.

"The Stuart murder may not sound as dramatic as the 'Boston strangler,'" commented a shop assistant on the city's fashionable Beacon Hill, "but in some ways it is worse for us." The fatal shooting of Carol Stuart 10 weeks ago has raised a storm that now rages even more fiercely than when it began. It has made this proud city appear primitive, racist and gullible.

On the night of October 23 television viewers were treated to news pictures which were shocking even to those hardened to inner-city crime. A seven-months pregnant white woman was slumped in the passenger seat of a stationary Toyota car. Her dark curly hair was matted with the blood from a bullet wound. Beside her was a man, teeth gritted and chest bare, stiffened with pain from the bullet in his stomach.

Audiences simultaneously heard the just-completed telephone conversation between the wounded man, who did not appear to know where he was, and the police cars who were trying to answer his calls for help. Only by turning on and off their sirens — so that the police telephonist listening on the Toyota's car phone could judge when a police car was getting close — had the police found the scene of the crime. It was sensational broadcast news.

In the newspapers the next day Bostonians were able to read in detail how 29-year-old Charles "Chuck" Stuart, the successful manager of the city's most exclusive furrier, and his 30-year-old wife, Carol, a lawyer, had been happily driving away from their hospital's pre-natal class that night; how a black man in a baseball cap had burst into the back of their car while it waited at

traffic lights and demanded cash and Carol's rings; how the attacker had been panicked into thinking that the pair were undercover police officers and twice pulled the trigger of his .38 pistol.

The impact on public and political consciousness was instant. The mainly black Mission Hill district of Boston, near where the attack took place, was swamped with police conducting street searches until "a chosen few" suspects had been found. The top choice, a 39-year-old black criminal and gun fanatic called Eddie Bennett, had allegedly even confessed to the crime and been seen carrying jewels and a gun from the scene.

The Stuarts, meanwhile, were being canonized as "the Camelot couple" (the ultimate Kennedy-town accolade). According to Father Francis Gallagher, the priest who had known "Chuck" since his days as an altar boy, "they were young people with the world on a lead". Charles Stuart was now a hero. It was reported from hospital how, 17 days after the shooting, he wheeled himself painfully to the outside of his dying baby son, born prematurely by Caesarean section, but who never recovered from oxygen loss during the shooting. Carol had died soon after the birth.

The smashed family was the quintessence of white middle-class values at the mercy of black ghetto crime.

Politicians plied the message for all that it might be worth. Republican leaders called for the death penalty to be restored. Democrats used the new threat to public safety as justification for a tax increase. Boston's Irish-American mayor, Raymond Flynn, believed that the publicity might help him to succeed Michael Dukakis as Massachusetts' governor. Even Dukakis himself, battered during the American presidential campaign for his alleged indifference towards blacks-on-white crime, attended Carol's funeral at Father



Disillusion in Camelot: Charles and Carol Stuart and, inset, Eddie Bennett, wrongly suspected of the attack

Gallagher's red-brick church of St James, close to her family home.

The packed congregation was read the husband's last tribute to his wife: "I miss you and I love you." Of her killer, she said that "in our souls we must forgive this sinner because He would too".

Last Thursday the same Charles Stuart was himself found dead in the Mystic River under Boston's Tobin Bridge.

A suicide note, left in a new white Nissan car bought with the insurance pay-out on Carol's life, did not admit to the killing but described the strain of the police hunt. But the dead man's younger brother confessed to police. Charles Stuart, it transpired, had shot his wife in the head. Rather less efficiently he had shot himself in the stomach while aiming at his foot. His brother had been on

hand to take away the gun and the stolen jewels. The black assailant, whose identity and guilt was by now all but established in the public's mind, had never existed.

Suddenly the city shuddered through a psychological gear change. Spontaneous black protests were quickly reorganized into community demands that police apologize to the people of Mission Hill, and that financial recompense be paid to the slandered district. Mayor Flynn and his men, the protesters said, had too readily jumped to the conclusion that "a nigger pulled the trigger".

The mayor, who had traditionally enjoyed good relations with the black community, was reluctant. He spluttered about how he had already "addressed the apology issue". His annual state-of-the-city message needed hasty rewriting

for delivery last night, and his gubernatorial ambitions evaporated with every new word he wrote.

The Boston media felt foolish and betrayed. They now set off determinedly to show yesterday's "Camelot husband" as today's diabolical fiend. Why, for example, had the "assailant" shot a woman in the head before shooting a man in the stomach? Why in all the immediate publicity after the shooting had Stuart not expressed worry or grief for his wife?

Friends and family members were discovered to have known about life insurance policies, although initially these were thought to be too small to explain such a crime.

To complete the now hopelessly film-like plot, a "stunning blonde" girlfriend was discovered, a figure

"The smashed family was the quintessence of white middle-class values at the mercy of black ghetto crime. Politicians plied the message for all that it might be worth. Republican leaders called for the death penalty to be restored"

skater and top university graduate who had sometimes worked with Stuart at the fashionable Kakas Fur shop. In addition to buying the new white car, he had used the first part of the insurance money to pay \$800 for a gold brooch and chain.

For Father Gallagher, standing among the red candles of the church in which he had married and buried Carol Stuart, this was "pure evil". "I've been a priest for more than 40 years," he said. "I've seen a lot but I know now that anyone who thinks they've seen everything is a fool."

The story of the murder soon became two very different inquiries. The first was a very visibly determined police hunt. Out in the ice-swept sea marshes of Boston's inner suburbia, divers searched for the gun and, after six days struggling against the fierce tidal flow, found the famous .38 pistol by the so-called "Dizzy" railway bridge from which the younger Stuart brother had hurled it.

A few — but socially important — miles away, in the smart outer suburb of Reading to which the Stuarts had moved after their marriage, police questioned neighbours around the slate-blue clapboard house. A Christmas wreath of blue teddybears was still on the front door. Inside, evidence of more insurance policies was found.

At Kakas Fur, in the sickly atmosphere of scented floor polish and stuffed animal trophies, the owners had to explain when they had noticed that the office safe was missing from the office safe. It had been kept unused for 10 years, they said, and Charles Stuart had the key.

But, as the police case began to clear, the second line of inquiry, the self-examination carried out by the people of Boston, continued all the stronger.

This is a proudly secretive city in a state whose law, unlike many other states, does not force family

members to inform upon each other's crimes. How had that encouraged the almost successful plot?

The city of the Kennedys has a specific history of racial tension entwined with its politics. The ultra-liberal policies for which Massachusetts is often ridiculed throughout the nation are a relatively recent arrival. Beneath the Democratic party surface is the still strong, clannish, Irish-American sense of self-help and neighbour-my-neighbour.

Had the media shown their own prejudice? Most denied it. Had they simply "put scepticism on the shelf"? The *Boston Globe* said it felt "duped".

What seems certain was the role of the television cameras. By happening to be in the position to film the murder scene they had raised awareness of the story and, more importantly, etched a particular version of it on the public mind. The film became a movie — and popular movies need next endings if the audience is not to feel cheated.

The most likely true end to this story is now the most simple. Along with life insurance policies worth almost \$700,000, books about starting a restaurant business have been discovered at the Stuart home.

Like the central figure in Theodore Dreiser's novel, *An American Tragedy*, Charles Stuart wanted to better himself in life and was prepared to kill his pregnant wife in order to do so.

But the questions will not stop yet. Father Gallagher has asked his congregation if "for just one day" they will forbear to speculate about the Stuart case. With "Chuck and Carol" book contracts piling up in New York and Boston, and election campaigns running till autumn, even that seems a vain hope.

A fight to be equal

David Blunkett, the blind Member of Parliament, was, in his own words, "an angry youngster who wanted to change the world", by the age of 16. His father had been dead for four years — the victim of an explosion at work — and Blunkett had been at a boarding school for the blind.

In an interview with Ray Connolly in *The Times* tomorrow, Blunkett explains that at school he

became a stirrer for good causes and led a delegation about the quality of the meals. It was the beginning of a pig-headed refusal to take No for an answer, to prove that he could be on equal terms with everyone else.

"I didn't want to be better than anyone else, just equal. And I wanted to show my mother that I could do it, that I could achieve and that I could do something to help and look after her."

"I wasn't sure whether I would succeed, didn't know what was going to happen to me or whether I was going to be able to look after myself."

Blunkett's story from childhood to Parliament is told in *The Times* Review section tomorrow.

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Africa's lion in waiting

Nicholas Bethell reports on a rare meeting with Nelson Mandela, symbol of the struggle against apartheid



Sickly and 71: an artist's impression of how Mandela looks today

"I did not plan it in a spirit of recklessness, nor because I have any love of violence," he said at his trial. "I planned it as a result of a calm and sober assessment of the situation that had arisen after many years of tyranny, exploitation and oppression of my people by the whites."

He maintained his support for armed struggle, but within stricter limits than those practised by the ANC's fighters. For instance, he expressed regret for the May 1983 bomb explosion which killed 17 people, including 12 civilians, in Pretoria. "We aim for buildings or property," he said. "It may be that someone is killed in a fight, in the heat of battle. But we do not believe in assassinations."

Unlike his wife Winnie, he has never supported the "necklace" killings of blacks alleged to have worked for the government, often as minor local officials in the townships. An assassination would only be justified, he told me, in the case of an informer who was actually endangering the lives of ANC fighters.

In 1985 President Botha offered to release Mandela on condition that he renounced violence. Mandela made it clear to me that he was prepared to recommend a ceasefire as soon as the government legitimized the ANC and opened talks with it. But there was violence on the government's side too, he said, and he would not humiliate the ANC by asking it to lay down its arms unilaterally. And, that being the case, he could not break with the ANC by

renouncing the struggle himself. He is, after all, the ANC's president.

He has moved away from the communist sympathies he held 30 years ago. "I am a socialist and I believe in a classless society," he told me. "But I see no reason to belong to any political party at the moment. Businessmen and farmers, white or black, can also join our movement to fight racial discrimination. It would be a blunder to narrow the movement."

He added: "Britain has helped us, under Mrs Thatcher, as well as under socialist governments, by condemning apartheid on principle. We may have different ideas about the methods that should be used, but the most important thing is to condemn apartheid outright."

After our talk, I was taken to see Mandela's communal cell. We walked in slow procession up flights of stairs and round corners, with Mandela leading the way as if showing me round his home. I met his five cellmates. One of them was Walter Sisulu, Mandela's co-defendant in 1964, who was himself released last year. They mentioned a few problems. There was a damp patch on one wall. The letters they received were being censored, words and whole sentences cut out of the paper with scissors. One letter looked as if it had been through a shredder.

"Aren't there any other complaints?" One man wanted to go home. Mandela said jokingly to his friends as we got ready to leave the cell. We walked out across the yard to a metal door in the wall. "Well, this is my frontier. This is where I must say goodbye," he said. I shook his hand, promised to write and walked out into the bright Cape sunshine.

I have written regularly these past five years, and I know that some letters at least have reached him. He has written back several times, I am told, but no letter has arrived. According to H.J. Coetsee, South Africa's minister of justice, letters from security prisoners "are sometimes subject to delay". I have been told by a senior South African official that the letters, one dating from 1985, are at last on their way.

Helen Suzman, the recently retired liberal South African politician, once described Mandela as "our country's only hope". That was probably true five years ago. I hope it is still true. But he will be 72 in July. He has had illnesses and operations since I saw him. I have a terrible fear that the South African government has, as usual, left things far too late.

Lord Bethell is a member of the European Parliament's Human Rights Committee.



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AGENDA FOR CHEVENING

Pay negotiations at Ford make a sober background to the Chancellor's traditional Budget deliberations at Chevening which take place over the next two days. If the Ford unions feel confident of rejecting an offer of 10.2 per cent, that suggests either that increased flexibility and common sense in the workforce is much exaggerated or that companies are being baited out of their own folly by the fall in the pound since Mr Nigel Lawson's resignation. Neither conclusion is reassuring.

Whatever the outcome at Ford, the case for a tough Budget is strong. Mr Major has made it plain that he believes in a firm fiscal policy to buttress a strong anti-inflationary monetary policy. The Budget must see him deliver.

In some ways the Chancellor has less room for manoeuvre than his predecessor had in previous years. The outcome of the public expenditure survey – planned by Mr Major himself when he was Chief Secretary – means he will not have the benefit of a fall in spending as a proportion of the economy in the coming year. On the revenue side the simplification of the tax system into just two separate brackets for income tax means that revenue will tend to be less buoyant as the effect of inflation moving taxpayers into higher rates is reduced. He also has to pay the cost of bringing in independent taxation of husband and wife, estimated at £500 million or more in the coming year, and the full-year cost of last October's restructuring of national insurance contributions.

To the extent that policy has already been loosened Mr Major should think hard about tightening it up again. The most obvious option is to repeat the 1981 strategy and not index personal allowances. This would be a blow for a Chancellor determined to focus on the social as well as economic aspects of his policies, but as Mr Major has remarked the

pain of policies to cure inflation is not half as bad as inflation itself. The alternative of a real increase in excise duties might be difficult to square with EC commitments and would boost the retail price index. Changes to public spending plans between surveys are usually to be avoided, but it would be well worth clawing back some ground on the spending side if sensible possibilities present themselves.

What this should mean in terms of the appropriate size of the Budget surplus will be learnedly debated in the seclusion of the Foreign Secretary's country residence. Last year's plans sketched in a figure for 1990-91 of £10 billion, or £11 billion if tax cuts are abjured. But since then economic growth has slowed substantially which, other things being equal, will of itself tend to reduce the Budget surplus. A lower public sector debt repayment would not necessarily imply a looser policy.

Markets will judge the package largely by the size of the net tax increase or tax cut. A neutral Budget or a tax increase would not necessarily prevent the Chancellor from making some useful structural reforms. What these reforms might be – apart from the well-rehearsed plans for independent taxation – is more obscure than usual this year, both inside and outside the Treasury, because the new Chancellor has had relatively little time to formulate his views. But there is scope for further progress in levelling the playing field in the taxation of savings.

The important thing is to get the big numbers right. The most ingenious and far-reaching tax reforms will avail the Conservatives little at the next election if the Government has failed to get inflation under lock and key. A sound strategy for keeping inflation under control is always a Budget prerequisite; this year it is the beginning, middle and end of the story.

TEST OF INTEGRITY

Ever since the British Government decided to negotiate the terms on which Hong Kong would be handed back to China in 1997, ministers and officials have insisted that their sole concern is to secure the lasting welfare, and freedom, of its 5.7 million people. Hong Kong's confidence in China's honour – and thus in the worth of the 1984 Sino-British Declaration – was destroyed by the Tienanmen Square massacre. The task before Mr Douglas Hurd, who flies to Hong Kong today, is to restore confidence in Britain's honour.

He told *The Times* this week that "the first prize" for British policy would be to secure Chinese assent to British provisions for the colony, ensuring a "through train" from British to Chinese rule. That will not convince Hong Kong's people that Britain is determined to protect their rights – and to offer them shelter – if these are violated after 1997.

British policy has been based on the assumption that China can be persuaded, in its own interest, to observe the spirit of the "one country, two systems" formula aimed at securing the continued prosperity of Hong Kong. Since Tienanmen, however, China has made it increasingly clear that it views Hong Kong not as an economic asset, but as a political liability – a centre of subversion and counter-revolution which it intends to neutralise, at whatever cost.

It has accused campaigners for democracy in the colony of sedition, attacked proposals for a Bill of Rights and toughened clauses in its draft of the Basic Law under which Hong Kong will be governed after 1997. This week, it replaced its "relatively liberal representative in the colony with Mr Zhou Nan, a hardline associate of the Chinese Prime Minister.

Mr Hurd's words may well be interpreted in Hong Kong to mean that Britain puts smooth relations with China before the interests of its subjects, or that Britain is stalling for time, hoping that in due course China will see reason and avoid Britain's embarrassment of confrontation.

To dispel that impression, he should make plain Britain's determination, if necessary, to act unilaterally. He needs to respond to the "strong and legitimate pressure" from Hong

PAYING FOR WHAT WE GET

Few subjects arouse as much passion in this country as the argument over charging at museums. The Commons Select Committee on Education, Science and the Arts failed to reach agreement in Wednesday's report, dividing (predictably enough) on party lines. Yet the recommendation on which they disagreed sounds hardly worth debating in the first place. This was that Britain's museums and art galleries should "consider" introducing entrance fees. As the Government leaves them to decide this for themselves, it is safe to assume that most of them do "consider" it already.

Of the 2,300 or so art galleries and museums, it is the 19 great national institutions around which controversy mainly revolves. About a third of these now charge, most of them having taken the decision within the last five years. The Natural History, Science, and Geological Museums in Kensington all now charge, while the Victoria and Albert invites voluntary contributions. The British Museum, National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery, and the Tate are all still free. Sir David Wilson, director of the British Museum, together with his colleagues from the National Gallery and the Tate, wrote yesterday in *The Times* strongly arguing the case for free admissions.

None can reasonably hope to be self-financing on the basis of revenue collected at the turnstiles. The Natural History Museum, for example, earns £1.5 million annually by charging and a total of £9 million from its own enterprises. But it needs £30 million annually to go on. As there is a limit to what it can realistically charge, it must always depend heavily on the Government.

Like most of those which have made the big decision, the Natural History Museum has no

intention of reversing it. Most of the money has been used to improve customer facilities. Better lavatories, refreshment rooms, and shops have had to be built by many museums which charge, because the public wants better value for its money. The switch from being take-us-as-you-find-us institutions to customer-oriented places of entertainment has meant a physical and philosophical transformation.

Most of those which introduced charges several years ago experienced an initial drop in custom, although until they installed turnstiles at the entrance, many museums had little more than estimates of the numbers. There was also a natural inclination towards hyperbole, since high numbers indicated popularity and success. On the basis of the more precise figures now available, most have recently reported a slow rise in numbers again.

There are two important caveats. One is that not all national (still less local) institutions could rely upon regaining their lost custom. That is why the present policy is right, since it leaves trustees to make a judgement for themselves. The other is that provision must be made for those who cannot afford the full admission fee. There should be concessionary rates for children, pensioners, students, the disabled, and the unemployed. There should also be free admission at certain times. Its museums and galleries are among Britain's great resources. The purpose of charges should be to make them even better – not to drive away the young, the old, or the poor.

With these provisos, however, the principle of charging (rather less than the local cinema in most cases) is a good one. All museums and galleries should indeed "consider" it. One wonders why the MPs found it so difficult.

Meeting rise in the business rate

From the Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry

Sir, Your leader, "Sound and fury" (January 4), about the new business rate missed some important questions.

Any tax which bears no relationship either to the cost and quality of the services received or the ability of the taxpayer to pay is most unlikely to be popular. So it has proved with the new uniform business rate, although some of the recent hysteria is not called for.

Unfortunately, the intrinsic merits of the Government's reform of the recent unsatisfactory business rating system have been masked by two fundamental errors – about which we have been warning for 18 months.

First, the Government is determined to collect substantially more from business – some £2 billion – than would be needed to meet the cost of the services it now receives from local authorities.

This implies that the new business rate should be closer to 25p in the pound than 34.8p in the pound.

Secondly, the reason why the winners are keeping quiet, as you observe, is simple: there are no winners. The transitional arrangements mean that no business – literally – will see any substantial reduction in its rate bill in the short term, even though over 100,000 businesses legitimately expect to see their rate bills cut in half.

There are over 500,000 businesses whose rate bill, even with transitional protection, will rise by some 27 per cent a year for the next two or three years, while among manufacturers in the North and Midlands in particular there are some severely disadvantaged expectations.

What the Government should now do is, at minimum, to ensure that the cost of transitional protection is met by the Exchequer, rather than by businesses that have been paying excessive rate bills for years, while the product of the uniform business rate should gradually be brought into line with the costs of the services that business receives from local government – by pegging the rate at 34.8p in the pound indefinitely.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN M. M. BANHAM,

Director-General,
Confederation of British Industry,

Centre Point,
103 New Oxford Street, WC1.

From Mr A. C. Marriott

Sir, Much publicity has been given to instances where the rates pay-

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Patients' rights on medical records

From Mr Arnold Simanowitz

Sir, I was delighted to see Emma Nicholson (article, December 28) raise the question of the rights of patients in relation to medical records but she has only dealt with the half the problem.

This transitional relief, however, will not apply to those businesses who move premises after March 31, 1990. For these companies the liability will be based on the full figure proposed by the district valuer, which could cause, particularly in retail property, a liability many times that of 1989-90.

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TIMES DIARY

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

Journalists ringing the Northern Ireland Office are to be spared the shock of hearing a Government press officer announce himself as Ian Paisley. The 23-year-old graduate, who shares the name with his father, the irrepressible MP for Antrim North, has had his job application turned down by senior civil servants. But, in an equally unlikely move, Paisley junior has landed a job as a journalist on *The Irish Press*, the paper founded by Eamon de Valera who, as the father of the Irish Republic, is not a name widely revered in the Paisley household.

In an even worse blow to family honour, Paisley's first assignment is a 1,000-word article on the 12 things he most likes about Dublin. The only small consolation for Paisley senior is that his errant son could only come up with six.

Following last week's report from the independent analysts, Public Policy Consultants, which found that Labour's policies would impose huge burdens on business, I learn that the shadow chancellor, John Smith, has pulled out of a seminar organized by PPC and *Business Magazine* to give Labour the opportunity to explain its policies to a selected group of 130 leading businessmen.

But, Smith tells me, the problem is merely one of diary dates and should not be taken to imply that Labour is in any way shy of explaining its policies to the business community; in fact, says Smith, he already spends huge amounts of his time in boardrooms and at City dining tables explaining how a Labour government would get manufacturing industry on its feet again.

Bruce Kent of the CND, who embarrassed Neil Kinnock by successfully moving a resolution calling for huge defence cuts at last year's party conference, will not, it seems, be causing further embarrassment by joining the Labour benches in the Commons. Kent tells me that he has turned down invitations to stand for Labour in two London marginal seats, Hornsey and Putney, and says "the best contribution I can make to disarmament is to continue working for CND".

BARRY FANTONI



"Probably they only noticed it was missing when it came to paying for lunch"

If you spot the Conservative backbencher Michael Mates on television looking thoughtful during Prime Minister's Questions, don't imagine he is pondering Mrs Thatcher's words of wisdom: it is much more likely that he is wrestling with the cryptic intricacies of seven across or 10 down. Last week he fulfilled one of his life's two remaining ambitions by winning *The Times* weekly prize crossword competition. Mates tells me that he submits about 45 entries a year, and has been doing so for years, but that this is the first time his name has been picked out of the hat. His remaining ambition, by the way, is to appear on *Desert Island Discs*.

One who has already made it on to *Desert Island Discs* is Labour's Dennis Skinner, whose performance on the programme last weekend was one for connoisseurs to savour. Skinner, who turns down invitations to appear on the likes of *Wogan* on the grounds that it is "gimmicky", accepted Sue Lawley's invitation as the opportunity to make serious political points in an entertaining way.

His choice included non-political songs from Barbra Streisand, Al Jolson and Stevie Wonder, and a Frankie Laine number which Skinner himself used to sing as an amateur crooner on the Derbyshire pub and club circuit. But politics reappeared in a song called *Daddy, What Did You Do In The Strike?*, recorded by Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger as a tribute to Arthur Scargill and the miners during their long-running dispute.

The usually comprehensive BBC record library said it did not have the record, the first line of which runs "It was in the year of 1984 when the s*** hit the fan". But Skinner is not a man to be deterred so easily; he provided his own copy. The repeat of the programme, incidentally, for readers who want to hear the ditty, is on Radio 4 this morning.

The trouble with straws in the wind is that anyone spotting a percentage in gleaning them might well end up with enough to make a brick. And a brick in the wind is, as any metaphorician will tell you, a very different kettle of fish.

As I write this, I have before me a heart-warming photograph of a woman with a telephone in her hand, and a little girl on her knee. The woman is smiling, and the child is waving. An ordinary enough maternal vignette you will say, provided you can summon the requisite pomposity, but that is because you do not know the half of it. The half of it is that this winsome snapshot is not ordinary at all; it is, in fact, the photograph of a video-telephone screen, and the other half of it, therefore, is that, somewhere, on another video-telephone screen to which this one is connected, there will be a complementary

Gorbachov in Vilnius is like Lenin at the Finland Station, only in reverse. Lenin at the Finland Station, 72 years ago, represented the arrival of communist power in the Russian Empire. Gorbachov in Vilnius represents the departure of communist power from the same empire.

The mere fact that Mikhail Gorbachov is in Vilnius at all speaks volumes, given the circumstances. The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is in Vilnius to reason – or to plead – with what he still regards as the Lithuanian section of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. That section, at the end of last month, issued a unilateral declaration of independence, proclaiming itself the Communist Party of Lithuania. This step does not just herald secession, as some reports suggest. It is secession. The power structure in the Soviet Union – now fast crumbling, but the only power-structure – is the Communist Party. So when the party in Lithuania set up on its own, it was taking Lithuania out of the Soviet Union.

Gorbachov has allowed it to be known that he rules out the use of force to keep Lithuania in the Soviet Union. To rule out force, in the circumstances, is to

accept secession. In that context Gorbachov's visit to Lithuania seems incongruous; rather as if President Lincoln after Fort Sumter had gone to the state house in Charleston to address the legislature of South Carolina.

It is assumed that Gorbachov expects his Lithuanian comrades to help him save face. If so, he must be a desperate man. No doubt the Lithuanian comrades would like to help Gorbachov, if only for fear of finding something worse in power in Moscow. But that consideration must necessarily give way, in the context of Lithuanian secession, to local considerations.

Putting it more brutally, the Lithuanian comrades will be thinking of their own skins, not Gorbachov's. They are at present basking in unusual – and probably ephemeral – popularity, precisely as a result of their party's secession from the Soviet Communist Party. If the Lithuanian comrades made significant concessions to Gorbachov, they

new-found popularity, and ensuring that Sajudis – the Lithuanian nationalist movement – wins by a landslide in the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, due on February 24. (Presumably the successful Sajudis candidate will not take their seats, but will interpret their victories as elections to an independent Lithuanian parliament. There is an Irish precedent: Sinn Fein candidates for Irish seats in the United Kingdom elections of 1918 did not take their seats at Westminster but set up Dail Eireann.) The Lithuanian comrades are unlikely to sacrifice themselves for Gorbachov, and Gorbachov is therefore unlikely to bring back any substantial concession from Vilnius to Moscow.

I believe that the disintegration of the Soviet Union is now irreversible and that its pace is likely to increase after Gorbachov's return from Vilnius. I agree with "Z", the author of the important article in *Daedalus*,

an excerpt from which was published on this page yesterday, that Soviet communism is unsavable. I am puzzled, however, by the author's apparent assumption that the Soviet Union will pass from communism to capitalism in one piece, albeit with great difficulty. I

strongly dissent from the romantic metaphor of the conclusion (to the excerpt published): "The Soviet world's transition to normality will be a long time coming. The party, though now dyed with the hues of glasnost and democratization, will cling to the bitter end, like some pained tonic, around the bodies of nations it has enfolded in its embrace for so many decades."

What is wrong with that metaphor is the characteristic American assumption that all the poison comes from communism. In reality the bodies of nations beginning to break away from the Soviet world have plenty of poison in them anyway. It was not from Marx or Lenin that Bulgarians learned to

hate Turks; Romanians, Hungarians; Georgians, Ossetians; Azeris, Armenians; and vice versa in all cases. Nor was it from Marx and Lenin that Muslims and Christians, or Orthodox and Catholics, learned to hate one another.

With certain major exceptions – mainly in Stalin's last years – the Soviet system, and the Marxist-Leninist ideology which served it as a means of communication and as a discipline, effectively discouraged the expression of national, ethnic and religious animosities, even anti-religious animosity, has been discouraged for many years.

Glasnost, by allowing political nationalism to find its voices, blew the Soviet Union apart. For some, but not all, of those in the process of ceasing to be Soviet citizens, this is a happy outcome. The Baltic republics seem likely to become working democracies and, in due course, members of the European Community. The future of the rest of the Soviet Union is much

more doubtful. The disintegration is bound to be an untidy, painful process. In each potentially independent republic there are substantial ethnic minorities – like the Armenians in Azerbaijan, or indeed the Russians in Lithuania. These are likely to emigrate or be forced out; bloodily in some cases. As the process develops, nationalist passions will rise, often accompanied by religious acrimony. Intolerant right-wing parties will find conditions favourable to them, not least in Russia itself. Stable democracies are quite unlikely anywhere to the south and east of the Baltic republics, within the Soviet Union.

The 1990s will see, in Europe, a situation more like the 1890s than most of the 20th century. A united and mighty Germany will be looking eastward into a vast zone of instability, but also of opportunity, mainly economic, but political also. Already last week a headline in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* read "Russia's Germans will no longer be ignored". We are likely to hear more along those lines.

Contemplating those prospects, with their explosive possibilities, I could wish that Gorbachov succeeds in his mission in Vilnius, and begins to check the disintegrating processes. But I fear that is most unlikely.

hunt for the rotten ones, be they many or few, is being pursued with due diligence, it sees Scotland Yard flapping a limp hand when asked whether PC Judd is to be subject to disciplinary proceedings, and declaring that it is too soon to say.

Because here is where the analogy breaks down. It would be a pity if the public continued to believe that every newspaper was as bad as the worst, but a pity cannot damage the fabric of our society. If the public is convinced that the police as a whole are corrupt and crooked, and cannot be disabused of that conviction, then we are in very serious trouble. For when the scent from the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad mingles with that from Notting Hill, it will take a great deal more than a public relations exercise to make the result smell like jasmine.

Of course there must be safeguards to ensure justice for officers accused or under suspicion; disciplinary proceedings are a parallel to a trial. But there is no possible excuse for the failure of his superior, the instant Mr Taylor's award was announced in the court, to make a statement declaring that PC Judd was suspended from all duties until the appropriate tribunal was set up; and that public declaration should have been combined with a private message to PC Judd that he may have missed his vocation, and if he wished to resign from the force immediately, no obstacle would be put in his way.

If the public's confidence in the police is lost, I cannot see how it can be regained. And if it is not regained, the damage to our entire way of life would be immense, so vital is the need for a force which can be relied upon; by which I mean one that does not contain officers whose actions lead to a court case costing the Met £10,000 for wrongful arrest, £20,000 for malicious prosecution, and £70,000 as a mark of disapproval of the police in general.

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Bernard Levin on a curious case that is having trouble emerging from a Scotland Yard pending file

Justice under a blue cloud

Leave us make ourselves comfortable. No tight clothing, a favourite armchair, perhaps a drink in hand. The cat may be curled up nearby. Music? Yes, but nothing too grave; possibly one or two of the unaccompanied cellos suites of Bach. Lights not too bright, but nothing that could be called gloomy. Above all, we must be relaxed.

Right, then, the scene is set. In this peaceful mood, so conducive to musing upon fate and similar subjects, let us summon up a sense of wonder, even of awe, and contemplate the life, career and future of Police Constable David Judd.

PC Judd recently figured in a remarkable case; it was remarkable for several reasons, each of which I shall touch upon.

The first, so good; replenish your drink and give the cat another sardine, and we shall continue. It now transpires that only a week before the Taylor judgment a more modest sum (£3,500) by way of damages, for a very similar action, was awarded to a Mr Lee. On this occasion, no fewer than four officers were involved, but you will be interested to hear that PC Judd was one of them. (I can find no information about Mr Lee's trade; perhaps he was a distinguished brain surgeon, or the captain of a lifeboat.)

His present record is not only large, but dramatic. The huge sum was paid to a Mr Rupert Taylor, a gentleman of – ahem – colour. PC Judd had arrested him in Notting Hill – it is not clear why – and at the station our neighbourhood bobby had him strip-searched and subjected him to verbal abuse, though not physical assault (*ah, monsieur*),

decided that the accused did not have in their possession the drugs that were said by the police to have been found on them; rack my brain as I will, I cannot understand, then, how the cannabis got into their pockets. (It can't, for instance, have fallen off a lorry.) Incidentally, at the time of this writing, PC Judd had not yet been suspended, nor had it been decided whether disciplinary proceedings were to be taken against him, though more than a month has passed since the case, with its damages, ended.

Well, well, well, well, well. Just as Mr Taylor was getting his damages (you can buy a lot of dominoes for £100,000), it was announced that Mr Geoffrey Dear, until now Chief Constable of the West Midlands, is to join the Inspectorate of Constabulary, in an impressively high position; his remit is to improve public relations and the quality of the service of the police, not necessarily in that order. Mr Dear, you may recall, was the chief constable who recently felt obliged to disband his Serious Crime Squad, some members of which appeared to have quite uncannily unlikely to be in the habit of rolling a joint. He was, understandably, acquitted when his case came up, and he then brought a suit against the Met. The result was £10,000 for wrongful arrest, £20,000 for malicious prosecution, and £70,000 as exemplary damages to mark the gravity of PC Judd's behaviour.

So far, so good; replenish your drink and give the cat another sardine, and we shall continue. It now transpires that only a week before the Taylor judgment a more modest sum (£3,500) by way of damages, for a very similar action, was awarded to a Mr Lee. On this occasion, no fewer than four officers were involved, but you will be interested to hear that PC Judd was one of them. (I can find no information about Mr Lee's trade; perhaps he was a distinguished brain surgeon, or the captain of a lifeboat.)

Let us go back to the damages awarded to our hero's clean-living victim. He had not been beaten, and it is very unlikely that a man of his quality would have lost the respect accorded to him by his friends, colleagues and neighbours, merely for being prosecuted but acquitted. In



other words, the £100,000 award was, and was intended to be, not just compensatory, but salutary.

There is an analogy here, and few will fail to spot it. Some of the huge damages awarded in recent libel actions against newspapers have clearly been given not so much against the defendants, for damage to their reputations, but as a general condemnation of the Press in general and the tabloids in particular. *Crimine ab uno, pars omnes.*

Press the analogy: juries are convinced that all the newspapers are rotten, dishonest and full of lies, which is plainly nonsense. But that belief, however unfair, should make newspapers seek urgent ways of correcting the false impression, before it becomes so deep-rooted that it can never be erased.

And something like that seems to be happening to the police. It is no use their parroting the old excuse: it's only a few rotten apples in the barrel. The public is rapidly becoming convinced – though unjustly – that the barrel is filled with rotten ones. And so far from it being assured that the

There may, it is true, be some consequences for race relations. These will have to be faced. We cannot pick and choose which laws to apply. We certainly cannot play the game of turning a blind eye to the law when its application is considered to be offensive to a particular group. If we do, there will be no rule of law at all. The non-enforcement will be a signal of weakness, a sign that the government and law officers have no guts and lack the courage to defend the rule of law.

If we cannot defend the rule of law, what can we be trusted with? Failure to act now would be tacitly to condone a campaign for the death of a writer. If that is allowed, then other lesser forms of intimidation will also be thought permissible.

The Director of Public Prosecutions has the opportunity to call a halt to this slide now. He must take it. If he does not, then he will share responsibility for the consequences. Let us hope that these will not include Salman Rushdie's death.

Robert Kilroy-Silk asks the DPP to take action on Muslim threats

Why is the Director of Public Prosecutions taking so long to decide whether to prosecute those Muslims who have called publicly for Salman Rushdie to be murdered? What can he be afraid of?

It has been more than three months since Dr Kalim Siddiqui called for Rushdie's death at a meeting in Manchester. Others, many others, have made the demand before and since. Only last month, the priest of the Jamia Mosque in Birmingham said: "Islamic law says he should be killed, I agree with that."

There is, then, no doubt about where many Muslims stand on the issue. The question is whether such demands constitute a criminal offence. The burden of the demands is such that the DPP should at least look seriously at what has been said.

Section 4 of the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act, as amended by section 5 (10) of the Criminal Law Act, 1977, says in effect that whoever shall solicit, encourage, persuade or

surprising if at least some had not been provoked or stirred up by the inflammatory language to which they had been exposed.

The placards proudly carried through British streets screaming "Kill Kill Kill" demonstrate the effects of such provocation. So does the statement of 14-year-old Mohammed Omi, who stepped out of the meeting at the Jamia Mosque last month to announce that: "He should be killed, but I'm not old enough to do it. When I'm 20 or 21 I would kill him." This boy has obviously been provoked and stirred up by the ranting of the mullahs.

But that is not surprising. It would be amazing if they did not feel like that after the elders of the Muslim faith asserted that Rushdie had gravely insulted Islam and that the slur could be removed only by his death. It would not be surprising if, after the frenzy that has been whipped up, some would-be hero, a

hothead, a dimwit, attempted to take the law into his own hands. He would know that whatever the British law might say or do, he would be thought a hero, a historic figure, a person to be applauded by his co-religionists.

Since the provocation, stirring up, persuasion and encouragement of such men into this way of thinking is an offence, those causing the provocation must be charged. There can be no equivocation and no backing down. It is far too important to allow any room for cringing, wringing of hands or compromise. There can be no place here for appeasement.

The campaign against Salman Rushdie that is being waged by some Muslims, with its intimidation and intolerance, is nasty and offensive. It has not been sufficiently vigorously opposed by those who believe in – and depend upon – the maintenance of decent civilized values. It has even been given an air of respectability and justification by the craven attitude of some of the feebler members of the Labour Party.

The result is that many Muslims now feel not only that the politics of the mob, of bullying and intimidation, are acceptable, but that they are effective. They feel that they can act with impunity, that they can win.

It may be that they can. There seem to be so many cowards in the ranks of those who stand by defending free speech and the rule of law that the Muslim fundamentalists can trample over both with difficulty.

This must not be allowed to continue. The most minor traffic offender, the petty thief, even the litter bug, is quite rightly, subject to the law and hauled before the courts. Those who knowingly incite others to consider committing murder should be treated in the same way.

There may, it is true, be some consequences for race relations. These will have to be faced. We cannot pick and choose which laws to apply. We certainly cannot play the game of turning a blind eye to the law when its application is considered to be offensive to a particular group. If we do, there will be no rule of law at all. The non-enforcement will be a signal of weakness, a sign that the government and law officers have no guts and lack the courage to defend the rule of law.

When we cover the mouthpiece of the greatest boor in the world, we cannot see us

Faltering at the last interface

picture of the smile/wave. Probably dadde.

Which suddenly makes it a mite less heart-warming, for something chill has begun to creep up an artery. Not of course, that Taurus' further claim, likewise



COURT CIRCULAR

KENSINGTON PALACE
January 11: The Princess of Wales visited Thomas Coram Foundation's Mobile Team in Camden.

Viscountess Campden and Lieutenant Commander Patrick Jephson, RN were in attendance.

Birthdays today

Mr Anthony Andrews, actor, 42; Mr Ernest Armstrong, former MP, 75; Mr Michael Aspel, broadcaster, 57; Sir Charles Ball, company director, 66; Mr H.G.H. Barratt, trades unionist, 85; Lord Boardman, 71; Mr P.W. Botha, former South African president, 74; Sir James Bottomley, diplomat, 70; Air Vice-Marshal S.O. Buffon, 82; the Hon Sir Richard Butler, former president, National Farmers Union, 61; Mr James Byam Shaw, art historian, 87; Miss Stella Chalifac, statistician, 73; Mr Brendan Foster, athlete, 44; Mr Alan Frazee, 46; Mr Eric Heffer, MP, 68; Miss Anne Howells, concert and opera singer, 49; Lord Justice McCowan, 62; Mr Denis Milne, former managing director, BP Oil, 64; Mr James Mortimer, former general secretary, Labour Party, 69; Mr Des O'Connor, entertainer, 58; Sir John Rennie, former governor-general, Mauritius, 73; Sir Terence Streeton, diplomat, 60; Mr Justice Swinton Thomas, 59.

Service dinners

RAF Supply Branch
The RAF Supply Branch held a guest night last night at the RAF Staff College, Bracknell, in honour of Air Vice-Marshal R.C. Allerton, retiring Director-General of Supply, Wing Commander J.J. Cooke presided and Air Chief-Marshal Sir Brendan Jagger, Air Member for Supply and Operations, also attended. Air Marshal Sir Frank Holroyd, Air Marshal Sir Thomas Stonor, Rear-Admiral D. Allen, Rear-Admiral D.M. Pulverstaff and Mr T. Knapp were the principal guests.

HQ RAF Support Command
Wing Commander J. Young presided at a dining-in-night given by Officers of HQ RAF Support Command and RAF Brampton last night in Brampton Park Officers' Mess to honour the retirement of Air Commodore M.C. Derby. Air Vice-Marshal M.J.C.W. Dicken also spoke.

Dinner

Lord Mayor
The Lord Mayor entertained at dinner at the Mansion House last night the members of the Court of Common Council, the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Mayors and Leaders of the Greater London Boroughs, Aldermen, High Officers of the Corporation of London and Ward Clerks of the City of London. The speakers were the Lord Mayor, the Lord Mayor of Westminster and the Chief Commoner, Sir Ralph Perring and Mr Richard Page, MP, were among the other guests.

L.A. Wingfield

The Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators of the City of London announces that a Memorial Service for its late Founder Member and Clerk, Liverymen L.A. Wingfield, M.C., D.F.C., will be held at St Michael's Church, Cornhill, on January 23, 1990 at noon.

Forthcoming marriages

Sir Bernard Ashley and Madam Regine Burnell
The engagement is announced between Sir Bernard Ashley, of 43 Rue Ducale, Brussels, and Madam Regine Burnell, also of Brussels. The marriage will take place in the summer.

Mr H.G. D'Oyley and Miss A.E. White
The engagement is announced between Hadley Gregory, only son of Sir Nigel D'Oyley, Bt and the late Mrs Dolores D'Oyley, of Crowhurst, Sussex, and Amarette Frances Elizabeth, youngest daughter of Major and Mrs Michael White, of Barnham Royal, Buckinghamshire.

Mr C.W.F. Hayward and Miss M.C. Gray
The engagement is announced between Charles William Francis, younger son of Sir Anthony and Lady Hayward, of Dane Street House, Chilham, Kent, and Michelle Clare, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Nigel Gray, of Hunters Vane, Touchend, Berkshire.

Mr D.J. Aaronberg and Miss L.J. Aaronson
The engagement is announced between David Jeffrey, only son of Mr Sidney Aaronberg and the late Mrs Yvonne Aaronberg, stepson of Mrs Irene Aaronberg, and Linda Jeannet, only daughter of Ms Leslie Aaronson and the late Mrs Freda Aaronson, stepdaughter of Mrs Ruth Aaronson.

Mr D.H. Barnewall and Miss V.J. Barnewall
The engagement is announced between David Hugh, son of Mr and Mrs Robert Barnewall, of East Haddon, Northamptonshire, and Vanessa Julie, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs James Branch, of Boughton, Northamptonshire.

Mr H.P.E. Barnes and Dr F.H. Emrys-Roberts
The engagement is announced between Henry, only son of Commander Peter Barton, RN and the late Mrs Susan Barton, of Putney, London, and Frances Helen, youngest daughter of Dr and Mrs Meyrick Emrys-Roberts, of Motcombe, Shaftesbury, Dorset.

Major S.P.M. Blyth and Miss D.J. Cassens
The engagement is announced between Major Seymour Blyth, the Royal Anglian Regiment, son of Col and Mrs P.D. Blyth, of Walsham-le-Wilows, Suffolk, and Deborah, daughter of the late Dr N.E. Cameron and Mrs R. Stowe, of Walmer, Kent.

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THE ARTS/ROCK

Why is the music press pouring scorn on "coffee table rock"? Steve Turner speaks up for maturity

Rock and rolls and wrinkles

There has been wailing and gnashing of teeth by some rock critics as the Eighties have come under review.

The main cause of the agony has been what might be called the Phil-Collimation of rock and roll: the fact that the bulk of the biggest acts in the world are now middle-aged. It does not worry the general public much, but it worries writers who see it as an indication of failing standards and lost ideals.

They think back to the days when singers had enough hair to consider a choice of styles, when fathers shouted "turn that racket down", and local councils put bans on the music. Then they see Prince Charles shaking hands with nice guy Phil and they begin to weep.

Why, oh why, they cry, are young people buying the music of a 50-year-old woman (Tina Turner) or a 40-year-old man (Bruce Springsteen)? Why did it have to be those "wrinkle rockers", the Rolling Stones, who mounted the most lucrative tour of America last year?

Why did Pete Townshend not expire painlessly before he got old? Oddly, the lament rarely extends to black male artists. There have been no calls for James Brown, now 56, to seek early retirement, and at 72 John Lee Hooker is counted a living legend. BB King had to wait until he was 64 to support U2 on tour.

Another trend worrying the critics is the ageing of the white rock audience. Rock is now bought by executives with CD players; over-25s dominate the album-buying market. The music that once shook the walls of the city now gently vibrates the cocktail cabinet.

They also report appalling concert scenes: unfashionable people, some with receding hairlines, who sit down in their seats during slow numbers and who clasp their hands rather than punch the ozone layer.

There have even been sightings of parents taking their children to see



Phil Collins: critics battle to understand the "Collimation" of rock

The Who and Paul McCartney.

"If the atmosphere had been a bit more abandoned and boisterous this could almost have been of the Proms," wrote one reviewer of McCartney's current audience. "(They) ... looked the sort that wouldn't recognize a designer if one inscribed his or her name on their casual leatherwear."

This snuffy attitude — middle-age as a term of derision rather than to describe a life of time — is itself based on a rather old premise, that rock is a music by and for

young people, with lyrics rooted in adolescent restlessness; a music which has failed in its mission if comprehended by the older generation.

These days are long gone. The oldest people to have had a teenage experience of rock are now in their mid-50s, so rock is music enjoyed by at least three generations. There is a generic connection — although a qualitative difference — between Elvis Presley and Jason Donovan, whereas there wasn't between Bing Crosby and Elvis Presley. The parents of the Sixties were convinced that



Tina Turner at 50: effortlessly attracting the next generation of fans

by the time Mick Jagger was 30 he would have a sensible haircut.

Of course, rock helped make the rod with which it is now being beaten. When Mick Jagger said "I can't imagine prancing about on Top of the Pops when I'm 30" and then sang "What a drag it is getting old" in "Mother's Little Helper", he was helping to sustain the myth that rock was a young man's business, and that clinging on to life when the wrinkles set in would be a capitulation to the forces of greyness. The fact is, Jagger and



Mick Jagger: his generation found it is not such a drag growing old

his generation grew old and found that it was not such a drag.

What does have to be acknowledged is that the old songs lose their cultural resonance. "Satisfaction", as sung by a middle-aged multi-millionaire with four children in 1990, means something different from what it did in 1965. Back then it was possible that the 22-year-old Jagger was not getting enough "girl reaction", and was irritated by radio and television commercials.

Now we know he is just acting.

Likewise, Paul McCartney singing "Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" with a mock psychedelic light show is more Madame Tussaud's showcase than a rallying call for stoned hippies. But the power of songs to evoke memories of past decades is not a weakness. It seems reasonable to me that McCartney has chosen to play a selection of his past hits rather than an experimental blend of Acid House and New Orleans jazz, that his audience is drawn from the fortyish generation and that none of them are carted off in trance states.

It also seems reasonable that any generation reared on rock will want to stick with it. The tight leather pants worn at 17 would look ridiculous at 42, but why should a new CD be out of place?

Broadly speaking, the music created by older rock fans will contain more comfort than challenge, more familiarity than surprise. But then, with three kids, work pressures, a mortgage and early morning traffic, these people are looking to lower their blood pressure rather than raise their energy levels when they turn on the stereo. This is where the so-called "coffee table" rock of Dire Straits, Sting, Phil Collins and Chris Rea scores. This music has found its generation: a generation with money, car stereos and compact-disc players.

Rock is destined to get older still. They are not going to give up playing it and we are not going to give up listening to it. At one time marketing departments spoke of the 18-25 age group, then it expanded to become the 18-35s. Now it is 18-45 and growing. But this would only be worth lamenting if it crushed the abrasive music traditionally created by the young and hungry. As it is, Guns 'n' Roses can exist alongside Pink Floyd; Happy Mondays can play in the same world as Eric Clapton.

David Toop looks at the advance of compact discs and the threat to the industry

According to American homelessness Rita Rudner, the homeless people who shuffle around the streets of New York pushing shopping trolleys full of strange possessions are victims of the audio technology revolution. They committed themselves to Quad hi-fi systems in the Seventies and have never recovered from its demise.

"I just can't bring myself to buy a CD player until I have something in writing to say that the last thing they are going to invent," says Rudner.

There is a justifiable fear that, by the end of the century, those ubiquitous black stacking systems will have reached the ceiling and will require a steep ladder as an operational accessory.

But even so, according to the 1989/90 year book of the British Phonographic Institute, many rack systems now exclude record turntables, in anticipation of the day when vinyl becomes obsolete. To compensate, there is the growing popularity of the compact disc player, and the looming threat of CD-R, CD-E and DAT.

CD-E is an erasable CD which can be used to record and re-record perfect copies of source

material; CD-R is a CD which can be used just once for this purpose; and DAT is a digital audio tape, which can also "clone" an original but has the potential disadvantage of deteriorating tape.

These acronyms may mean nothing to you, but to the music industry they are the equivalent of a scarlet cloth in a Spanish bullring. Audio-tech guru Barry Fox could offer little on the subject, except to sow the seeds of fear. "It is a tricky subject," he said, "and if you're not careful, you'll get badly out of your depth."

"Anyone who comes into this area risks getting a lot of flack from BPI and International Federation of Phonogram and Videogram Producers."

The BPI is particularly sensitive. This week, for example, they took issue with the magazine *Which?* Lawyers have been consulted in connection with the frequent claims by *Which?* that the major record companies are "milking their customers" by overcharging for compact discs. The year book itself is in-

troduced with fighting talk: "In the past," the BPI claims, "the British record industry has perhaps been one of the softest targets for ill-informed criticism from a variety of quarters, notably the tabloid press."

"It is too often identified with the excesses of popular culture and this obscures the major contribution that the British record industry makes to the health of the economy as a whole and the total sum of enjoyment in everyday life." Yet without the excesses of popular culture, the British record industry would be a stunted plant.

One example of lawless behaviour which enrages the BPI like no other is the vexed issue of home taping. There is no question that the home taping of recorded music causes a loss of revenue for record companies, but one problem for the BPI is to convince consumers that they are morally wrong to indulge in this practice.

The developments of CD-R, CD-E and DAT have all intensified the debate. All present a

bright future of illicit duplication on a grand scale, as far as the BPI is concerned.

A large proportion of the music-buying public is not convinced that it should consider the record industry with benevolence. After all, some buying of compact discs is solely to replace vinyl pressings of intolerably poor quality. In such cases, the consumer pays twice while the artists and record companies receive a second helping of revenue.

The advent of compact discs has invigorated the record industry financially. Perhaps it briefly suggested a utopian dawn of passive consumption, listening to perfect reproductions of perfect music on perfect hardware. But popular music will always rely on an active approach to technology for its artistic growth. And technology will inevitably produce unwelcome effects to spoil its positive contributions. Record companies are surely foolish to believe that they can enjoy all the benefits and suffer none of the drawbacks.

Great life in the old country

ALBUMS

David Sinclair

Rodney Crowell: Keys to the Highway (CBS 46002-1)

So much of country music, whether new or old, conspires to give the impression that the person singing it is on the verge of falling into a deep sleep; something to do with those long-drawn syllables, and the lugubrious sound of the pedal steel, sleeping like warm treacle in to the grooves of so many gently lulling rhythms.

Not so the work of the Texan singer-songwriter Rodney Crowell, whose *Keys to the Highway* opens with a snap-sharp, up-tempo romp called "My Past is Present" which hits the senses like a splash of cold water in the face. The immediacy is maintained by "If Looks Could Kill", a swaggering honky tonk with a bass line that strides out with a brisk, easy confidence, and "Tell me the Truth", a superb slice of Fifties-style rockabilly swing which opens the second side.

Two other modern acts who have consistently mastered this kind of hot-wired "jumpy" country are Albert "Country Boy" Lee and Ricky Skaggs, both of whom share with Crowell the cachet of having worked their way up via the ranks of Emmylou Harris's incomparable Hot Band.

Crowell's own band, the Dixie Pearls, is an enviable neat and supple unit and boasts a golden asset in the gorgeously rich guitar tones of Steuart Smith, who performs with notable élan throughout; but gilds the contemplative "Don't Let Your Feet Slow You Down" with some especially wonky fills.

A more lachrymose mood sets in generally towards the end of the album with a trilling mandolin casting dappled shades across the ballad "Things I Wish I'd Said", and only one rather sickly lament, "You Been on my Mind", right at the finish, marginally queering an otherwise magnificent pitch.

THE CHRISTIANS: COLOUR

(Island 842 268-2)

It becomes clear with each successive playing of this, the follow-up to their implausibly successful debut album, that despite a lingering frisson of credibility, the Christians have become one of those drab populist acts, firmly cast in the Wet Wet Wet, Simply Red or Phil Collins mould.

Much time and money was doubtless spent in the painstaking process of crafting this music to the precise specifications of a clearly defined mainstream pop-soul market. The backing musicians, including Pine Palladio (bass) and drummers Steve Ferrone and Mana Katché are the best that money can buy (despite being awarded the most minuscule of studio credits).

The single "Words", and the lighthearted "Greenside Drive" boast a discreet, innocuous charm, but for the most part the album lacks any discernible spark of life. Lumbered with a set of deeply conservative arrangements, Gary Christian applies a voice that is simultaneously recognizable yet characterless, to material that simply lacks the grit to offer the listener any meaningful purchase.

DEMBO KONTE & KAUSU KUYATEH: JALI ROLL (Rogue FMSD 5020)

The kora-playing duo of Konte and Kuyateh, from Gambia and Senegal respectively, have been a regular attraction on the UK concert circuit for some time, but it is only recently that the pair has joined forces with various members of famed "Balkan" eccentrics 3 Mustaphas, 3, accordianist John Kirkpatrick of the Richard Thompson Band and others to form the Jali Roll Orchestra.

church bells booming over a dance beat. They are now touring to promote the album *Grossing 10K*, Fat Sams, Southward Rd, Dundee (0382 26836), Sunday, 10.30pm.

MARIA GRIFFITHS: Appearing on the same bill as distinguished reggae veterans Dennis Brown and Freddie McGregor, Griffiths was a member of Bob Marley's vocal backing group, the I-Threes. She is currently having success in the US with a re-issue of her ground-breaking single "Electric Boogie". Academy, Brixton, London SW9 (01-736 1022). Tomorrow, 7.30pm, £25.

FAIRPORT CONVENTION: Their annual Cropredy reunion concerts have gradually expanded into a year-round international touring itinerary, and while they are not a patch on the Richard

incongruously cool, walking swing bass line, and so forth.

Quite what these combinations achieve, beyond their novelty, is uncertain. There is little development of the song, which seem to chase their tails for five or six minutes once the basic themes have been stated, although several grooves of great prettiness emerge. *The Sundays: Reading, Writing and Arithmetic* (Rough Trade ROUGH 148).

The Sundays is one of those insufferably hip groups that pop up from time to time, whose prime function seems to be to provide music journalists with a raison d'être. Convened in Bristol in 1988, by singer Harriet Wheeler and guitarist David Gavurin, they were featured on the cover of *Melody Maker* before they had even released a single, and then lionised everywhere else out of all proportion to anything they were likely to achieve.

Their cool, arty poise and predictably jangly guitar sound betrays a host of impeccable (independent) influences, most glaringly the Smiths (especially on "I Kicked A Boy") and the Cocteau Twins.

Harriet Wheeler's voice has a purity, occasionally piercing quality, from which all hint of emotion has been ruthlessly expunged. The songs are self-conscious, soulless artifices.

that ushered in the glory days of English folk-rock, some of the old magic still lingers. Support is Kieran Halpin, whose songs have been covered by Dolores Keane and the Battlefield Band, both favourites of this column.

TV SMITH'S CHEAP: Formerly a singer with punk icons the Adverts and then leader of the criminally overlooked Explorers, TV Smith has felt hard times. Still he keeps bounces back with intelligent material. His latest band's début single "Third Term" ("Buried by the Machine") is out now.

CRICKETERS: The finest moment for Scotland's militant vegetarians has been "De Testimony", with its sampled

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Mourning and after

TELEVISION

Sheridan Morley

If death really is the last taboo in this country, then Nicky Cheetham's harrowing documentary on BBC 2 last night for *40 Minutes* may have gone some way towards opening up the debate that nobody really wants to have.

"A Place For Tom" centred on the pioneering efforts of the Alder Hey Hospital in Liverpool, to involve the parents and grandparents of dead children in some kind of therapy programme, which could overcome the mindless cruelty of friends and neighbours and even relatives saying "You'll be better after the funeral", or "After all, you've got another two kids".

Inevitably, any documentary of this nature leads itself to charges of voyeurism, and there were indeed moments when the close-ups of young bereaved mothers recalling the discovery of a cot death, lingering shots of piles of unused toys, seemed to be intruding for much longer than necessary into private grief. There were also moments when the film lost its focus, to drift off in search of ritually dotty spiritualists.

But the film raised some crucial questions, even if it did not always answer them. Is the Alder Centre the only place in the country where bereaved parents can expect some sort of psychiatric continuity of treatment? And, if so, is there any hope that counselling of this nature will spread to other hospitals and communities?

The idea of having parents long experienced in the grief of a dead child come together with those newly bereaved seems admirable, as does the decision to allow parents access to medical records and the precise details of their child's death, which are so often withheld by hospitals still believing in the virtues of secrecy.

If you lose a parent, as one of the mothers pointed out, you lose your past; if you lose a child, you lose your future, and it is in an attempt to reclaim that future that the Alder Hey is now working in partnership with the parents of dead children, to overcome the isolation of discussion groups and therapy sessions the isolation and heart-breaking despair that come of a tragedy which has for all too long and often been boxed away like the sadness themselves.

And yet the real shock of "A Place For Tom" was the realization that so many parents have been made to feel so alone. "A death like this had not happened to anyone I knew, to any of my family or friends," said John Gosney. "I felt like a leper."

The Alder Hey policy is to make parents feel they are not in isolation, that they can talk about their lost children and indeed come together to mourn them. It is a movement which, like that of the Aids hospices, has now to be encouraged to spread nationwide.

Faust is ageing gracefully. Ian Judge's production for English National Opera, in its second revival, has the panache of a Broadway classic; it maintains the momentum generated by this speedy dialogue version; and its principals are wearing well.

John Tomlinson — speak of the devil — has grown a flowing mane and long beard; the resemblance to a friendly gentleman of the road, or benevolent gardener, only makes more sinister his deadly allure as Mephistopheles. He still has a canny hand at making wine gush from a stone Bacchus, and exploding a brimming glass.

He has, however, grown perhaps just a little too accustomed to his own jokes. They seem just a little less sharply timed, though this first night audience, doubtless

Bill McAlister's long reign as emperor of the avant-garde is at an end. After an apparently undignified series of votes of "no confidence", and the appointment of an inquiry team to examine the management structure, the director and his deputy, Lisa Appignanesi, are to leave the Institute of Contemporary Arts next month.

The irony is that, in the 42 years since Roland Penrose and Herbert Read founded the ICA in the hothouse era of post-war surrealism, it has never been better organized. The place was in a state of crisis when Sorbonne-educated McAlister took over in 1977, having been artistic director of the Battersea Arts Centre. The ICA's

Arts correspondent Simon Tait on the background to the resignation of the ICA's director

Exit, left, the emperor of the avant-garde

then chairman, Cob Stenham, muttered unpromisingly, "I hope no-one will expect miracles from poor Mr McAlister."

But something of a miracle was wrought. McAlister acted as a kind of foreman who hired a team of experts and put them to work on their specialties: bold new directions were taken in dance, theatre, films, debates and installations, as well as painting and sculpture.

"All the previous directors had been producers. What Bill did was to organize a system of department heads who were the producers, not him. Part of the problem was that before he came Penrose was very much around and making his influence felt," said one former colleague. There were even two different exhibition organizers, neither knowing much about what the other was doing.

The building itself, in The Mall, has been a further problem. The ICA has it on a generous lease, but it is an almost impossible shape for its purpose, and advertising out front is banned by the Crown

because it faces the principal road access to Buckingham Palace.

McAlister said the ICA must stay at the edge of controversy, and it has, nor just through the mocking tabloid stories of the Seventies, but with politically dangerous projects such as the Palestinian film season — which miffed the leader of Westminster Council, Lady Porter. Westminster is a major funder of the ICA.

"It is quite wrong to say that I am going because of votes of no confidence in myself," said McAlister. "There have been rows about matters of internal resources, but there has been no disagreement with the staff about policy."

Nevertheless, insiders say that McAlister has become increasingly remote and irascible as the financial problems have grown. Moreover, the absence of a new general manager — apparently "gapped" to save money for a while, in true bureaucratic style — has angered staff. He and

Appignanesi depart leaving a record deficit of £500,000, almost as much as next year's Arts Council grant — but at least the grant is to be increased by seven per cent, something of a vote of confidence.

The inquiry team — led by Brian Wenham, a former BBC executive, and including three former department heads in Sandy Nairne, Paul Collard and Erica Carter — will report next week to the ICA's board. They are looking at the management structure, but their report is unlikely to be over-critical of McAlister. If the ICA is still seen as a crucible for new art, and it is, their view is likely to be that McAlister is largely responsible.

John Russell Taylor welcomes the opportunity, in a new touring exhibition, to reassess the achievement of the painter Frans Hals

Triumph of the people's painter

Is Frans Hals a painters' painter, to be understood and appreciated only by a select group of his peers, or is he a people's painter, too popular and hackneyed to rate much serious consideration? Is he a comfortable Old Master, or is he a dangerous iconoclast in disguise? Is he one of painting's supreme technicians, or is he culpably careless and slipshod? These are the kind of sweeping alternatives that criticism offers us. What we have lacked, for many years now, is the comprehensive one-man show which would allow us confidently to decide for ourselves. Now the Royal Academy is breath-takingly filling that gap, with a show of nearly 70 paintings, ranging from his earliest known works to his latest. It has already been seen (in, naturally, a slightly different form) at the National Gallery in Washington, will be in London from tomorrow until April 8, and will then move on to the Frans Hals museum in Haarlem.

The first discovery the show offers is that everything they say about Hals is both true and not true. Undoubtedly he is a painters' painter: I happened to look round some of the show with three leading painters, and can testify to the ecstasy Hals's handling of his medium excited in them. But that does not mean that he is at all satisfied, for the cognoscenti alone. Fellow artists may see exactly how he does what he does, and be amazed at the brilliance with which he surmounts or just ignores many perennial problems. But anyone can respond to what he is doing, with no more than the haziest notion of how he is doing it.

As a painter of people Hals has few equals, and the immediately astonishing thing about the show is how directly he puts us in touch with his human material, annihilating differences of time and place. His technique, whether we understand it or not, has a lot to do with that. He got the effects he did primarily by just putting on canvas, in the most direct possible way, what he saw.

When one considers that his was an age in which classicism was the predominate strain, and the observations of the eye were expected to be mediated by the formulations of the mind, it is amazing that he got away with what he did. Did not any of these solid burghers that he painted question his sketching in a facial feature, a hand or a detail of clothing with the fewest possible paint-strokes, so abstract-seeming

when examined in close detail that they match and outdo anything Manet could come up with in a similar line? Was not their puritan conscience appalled by the way he made it all look so quick and easy, when what they wanted was concrete evidence of man-hours spent, brush in hand?

It is in his human, and humane, perception that Hals can go straight to the heart of a non-specialist audience. Take, for instance, one of this show's great coups, the bringing together, after more than a century separated in different collections, of the pendant portraits of Stephanus Geraerds and his wife Isabella Coymans (c. 1650-2). These are unique in the painting of their time, and even in the work of Hals, so often the great exception, in that there is a clear interaction between them, a dramatic situation in which she offers him a rose as a token of love and he, in the other picture, responds by holding out his hand to receive it.

Each of the paintings is, on a purely human level, wonderfully warm and vivid, but put the two together and you get the most amazing reverberations, and an uncanny feeling that this is a tiny moment of time captured for all eternity: she is facing away from him, but her head turns towards him as though he has just said or done something to attract her attention, while they look at each other with half-smiles of such palpable warmth and affection that we for once are left in no doubt about the emotion behind the formalized gesture.

But everywhere you look there is this same emotional directness, this same truth to observed experience. Most often the people shown are in no way distinctive: just ordinary citizens of Haarlem, one supposes. Occasionally Hals goes in for the extreme and the grotesque, as in the "Malle Babbe", with her tankard of ale and the owl on her shoulder, or even the "Fisher Girl" with her wares on the beach.

But still, over and over, we have to wonder not only what contemporaries thought of Hals's style, but where on earth it came from. There is nothing in the work of his teachers or his Haarlem contemporaries to explain it, and he seems almost to have been born with it.

Though there is evident evolution all through his long career, we can already see the makings of his distinctive style very



Warm and vivid: "Isabella Coymans" by Frans Hals, on show at the Royal Academy

clearly in some of the earliest known works, such as the "Jacob Zaffius" of 1611: his handling will grow looser and more dazzlingly confident over the next 55 years, but his unmistakable touch is already there.

Surprisingly, for a painter who lets himself be so totally known in his work, Hals remains personally very mysterious.

There are no surviving drawings by him, and nothing that he painted before he was pushing 30. Whatever were his practice works like? And how prolific was he?

The curator of the exhibition, Seymour Slive, estimates that the canon is not more than 250 works, from a career covering more than half a century. And this from a man who could evidently, if he wished,

dash off a finished painting in no more than a day. The reason for this apparently low yield is probably that Hals was already out of time with his own time (a dangerous iconoclast indeed), and even more radically out of tune with the period which came immediately after.

Nor, it would seem, was he the easiest person to deal with. The history of the major group portrait, "The Meagre Company", is quite well recorded, in all its vicissitudes. It was commissioned by the City of Amsterdam, a few years before Rembrandt's "Night Watch", and it is some testimony of Hals's standing that such an important commission went to a painter from Haarlem.

However, he dragged his heels to such an extent that first the price was raised, presumably to encourage him, and then finally, when he had not completed it some three years later, it was taken out of his hands and given to Pieter Codde, a capable but much lesser painter, to finish. Meanwhile at one point Hals himself had urged the sitters from the Amsterdam Civil Guard to go and sit in Haarlem, as this would, he said, speed up the whole process remarkably.

As we have it, since recent cleaning, we can see for ourselves just where Hals stops and Codde starts. The elaborately decked figure on the extreme left, holding the standard, must be entirely by Hals, for instance, while the lace on the almost equally elaborate costume of the figure in the centre, with his back turned to us, could never be by Hals: fine but finicky, it is an object-lesson in what kind of art surrounded Hals, and what he, in his powerful and solitary fashion, reacted against.

Another of the great discoveries of the show is the range of small paintings, which he did throughout his life along with the more familiar big pieces. When Slive says of the late, small "Portrait of a Preacher" that all of Hals is there in miniature, and so is most of what painting has always been about, he is surely not far wide of the mark. But throughout, whether you move right away to take in the whole effect at a distance, or (much more excitingly) you move so close that details become richly sensuous abstractions, this is a show to affect both the mind and the heart, and to keep the eye busy until kingdom come. A wonderful way to inaugurate the Nineties.

Humour mingled with horror

in awe of the ever-expanding, now lustrous bass, was determined to take him entirely seriously.

And so, of course, was Faust. Arthur Davies is once more the personable and confused young Abbot, bookish of mind and arid of soul, yet, even before his new dawn breaks, as youthful and vital of voice as ever. The trees may threaten to overshadow his lover's "chaste demure" but the aria is fresh, little and bright with the legato singing which is ever more a part of this production.

Valerie Masterson, who has doubtless trod this theatre's boards many more times than almost anyone else on stage, is new to the role of Marguerite, and

Masterson's instinct for the tragic turn of phrase is her greatest strength: the "King of Thule" song, here uninterrupted by any recitative, was a jewel as rare as any in Faust's casket. Her Jewel Song itself, more pearly than diamantine, a cunning piece of artistry.

The only other newcomer is Steven Page, whose Valentine is as yet vocally tenuis but as sinister as the role must be here. Fiona Kimm's Siebel is as compelling as ever. Her Act Four aria, comforting the abandoned Marguerite, is eloquent with a grave beauty: her final attempt to reach her, when already fatally wounded by Faust, adds the final touch to a performance of minutely observed detail.

Ian Judge has returned to direct this revival, and it makes his mark in no small part as a result of the set pieces and the oppressive crowd scenes.

The return of the soldiers, its parade of shattered victims savagely undercutting the victorious and vacuous march, still chills the audience; the scene in the confessional, with Faust directing the Dies Irae, still properly shocks; the all-white mad scene, worthy of Opera Factory's David Freeman at his best, leaves its indelible mark.

So too does the musical direction of Jacques Delacote. He has

been at the helm ever since 1985, and he continues to direct the opera's cross-currents of humour and horror with perception and legerdemain.

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It's only frock and droll

THEATRE
Jeremy Kingston

Gland Motel
Drill Hall Arts Centre

confidence; they attest to that crucial element of the drag subculture, the sovereign importance of the frock.

But in an entertainment the frock must rule as joint sovereign with wit, and here the Bloofins troupe, recent winners of an OBIE award in New York, do well enough to get by capably. Some numbers are only so-so but the seemingly haphazard stage management, carefully contrived, you may be sure, is an engaging running joke, and any shortcomings could be forgiven a show where the closing number, "Keep Your Sunnyside Up", is sung by two fried eggs and a rasher of bacon — the latter, a generous slice of streaky, worn as a skirt.

The plot is as thin as the chiffon so liberally used in the costume department. Bette and her four companions are camping out in a New York square when she steps backwards into a truck and is whisked off to the astral plane. Her troupe set off to bring her back to earth, aided by Madame Blavatski and interrupted by the need for occasional song and tap.

Bette Bourne herself has a deep, chestnutty voice and the steady gaze of one who knows precisely the absurdity of her material, relishes just that quality and defies you not to share her enjoyment. The loose format is also, and surprisingly, strong enough to bear "Just a Little Bit", sung unselfconsciously to a dead lover by the whiteface artist identified as Pearl. The show is further remarkable for its lack of snout. A cheering evening.

Sylvie Guillem's début as Cinderella on Wednesday was eagerly awaited not only for the excitement which all her appearances cause, but because this was the first time since joining the Royal Ballet that she had danced anything by a British choreographer (although she had success in the Paris Opera's Anthony Tudor programme).

No doubt there will be some chauvinist nit-picking about her performance, but it seems to me that, just as happened with the American Cynthia Harvey in *Symphonic Variations*, the star from overseas gave most of the English dancers a lesson in how to tackle Ashton's choreography.

What a pleasure it was to see all of the steps so clearly set forth. This is only partly a matter of a notably strong and classy technique, although without that she would not have been able to sustain so smoothly and articulately, and at so unhurried a pace, the long and varied sequence of turns circling the stage at the end of her big solo in Act Two. Every jewel on that long necklace of steps showed real bubbling humour.

My heart sinks every time the curtain rises on David Walker's vulgarly ostentatious designs, but according to her custom Guillem insisted on modifying her costumes: slightly more ragged yet also more glamorous for the fire-side scenes; shorter, lighter, springier skirts for her tutus.

Jonathan Cope partnered her ably and animatedly, but the only performance on Guillem's level was Erol Pickford's jester, vividly blithé in humour, sharply classical but daring in his dancing.

The orchestra, under Mark Ermler, was particularly squatly and, strangely, intermittently



Ragged yet glamorous: Sylvie Guillem in the title role of *Cinderella*

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TELEVISION & RADIO

Compiled by Leslie Walton and Gillian Maxey

Religion of the terraces

TELEVISION CHOICE

Peter Waymark

Passion Play. (Channel 4, 8.00pm) presents linked portraits of two football clubs which mirror the religious divisions of their respective cities. Glasgow Rangers has a fiercely Protestant following, while Derry City draws its support from the Catholic population of Londonderry. Mike Cocker's film was made during last season when both clubs were chasing a league and cup double. On this side of the water, at least, the Rangers story is the more familiar and the film does little more than present a conventional fan's eye view of a rich and well-supported club. The outrage of some diehard fans at the signing of the Catholic Maurice Johnston seems to have subsided amid continuing success on the field, though Rangers has yet to emulate its Glasgow rival Celtic by winning the European Cup. Of greater



Maurice Johnston: Rangers signed him, despite the outrage of fans (Ch4, 8.00pm)

interest is the Irish segment of the film. Forced out of business in 1972 because Protestant clubs refused to play in Londonderry, Derry City has been reborn as a member of the Irish Republic's leagues and plays all its away matches south of the border. The players are a mixture of professionals and part-timers. Catholics and Protestants, and four of the team live in the Republic. While soldiers patrol the streets of Londonderry, Derry City's home games are trouble-free and unpoliced. All of which is a substantial achievement, fully matched by the team's outstanding 1988-89 season in cup and league. But the veteran civil rights leader, Eamonn McCann, warns that Northern Ireland's problems will not be solved by football alone. Despite the club's non-sectarian policy, few Protestants venture into Derry City's bogside ground. Some of them even support Glasgow Rangers.

Robert Venturi: Back to the Future (BBC2, 9.30pm) is a profile of the American architect who was called to the rescue after the Prince of Wales killed the proposed extension to the London National Gallery by describing it as "a monstrous carbuncle on a face of a much-loved friend". As a champion of post-modernism, about which he has written a seminal book, Venturi was considered just the man to give the National Gallery project a more acceptable face. The film charts the genesis of his design and follows him and his wife (also an architect) in a review of their work in the United States and Europe.

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FRIDAY JANUARY 12 1990

Executive Editor
David Brewerton**THE POUND**

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Market report, page 27

2,321 quit Lloyd's

Lloyd's of London revealed that 2,321 members tendered their resignations in 1989, the most ever in a year. In 1988, 1,750 left the insurance market; and 489 left in 1986.

Three hundred new members started underwriting in 1990, the lowest on record. In 1988, 951 members joined, and, for the five years before that, more than 2,000 members joined each year.

Profit warning

Jones Stroud, the manufacturer of elastic yarns, name tapes and electrical insulation, has given a warning that profits this year will fall below the £7.1 million of 1988-89. The warning came with first-half results showing pre-tax profits 6 per cent down at £3.46 million, despite a 6 per cent rise in turnover to £30.3 million. Earnings fell by 7 per cent to 11.6p, but the interim dividend is increased by a fifth to 3p. The shares were unchanged at 235p.

Tempus, page 24

STOCK MARKETS

New York Dow Jones 2784.72 (+14.08)
Tokyo Nikkei Average 3870.18 (+47.62)
Hong Kong Hang Seng 2655.52 (-12.48)
Amsterdam CBS Tendoy 1187.70 (+0.40)
Sydney ASX 1895.65 (+5.59)
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249.00)
New York: Comex \$412.50-413.00*

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent (Feb.) \$21.10 bbl (\$20.20)
Barrels latest trading price

TOURIST RATES

Australia \$ 2.14 2.01
Austria Sch. 20.4 18.2
Belgium Fr. 61.60 57.70
Denmark Kr. 1.88 1.70
France Fr. 56.57 50.57
Finland Mark. 6.94 6.54
Germany Fr. 6.93 6.53
Norway Kr. 2.915 2.756
New Zealand 13.53 12.50
Ireland 1.113 1.045
Italy Lira 2100 2050
Japan Yen 255.50 240.50
Malta Lira 11.75 10.53
Netherlands Kr. 1.08 1.02
Portugal Esc. 2.58 2.43
South Africa R. 4.40 4.00
Spain Pes. 189 177
Sweden Kr. 1.025 1.002
Turkey Lira 2.225 2.005
USA \$ 1.743 1.643
Yugoslavia Dinar 1.763 1.643

Rates for annual communication bank
notes only. Exchange rates apply to
traveler's cheques.

Rate Price Index: 116.5 (November)

** ** ** *

TSB profits slashed by cost of shake-up

By Neil Bennett

Reorganization expenses and spiralling costs slashed profits at the TSB Group by almost two-thirds to £155 million last year.

Pre-tax profits for the year to end-October fell by 15 per cent to £356 million. But exceptional provisions of £201 million reduced profits to £155 million, even lower than forecasts in the City.

The provisions include costs of £125 million for the four-year rationalization of the group's retail banking division. The reorganization includes 5,000 redundancies and 290 million of the

money is for severance payments. The remaining £35 million will cover the reorganization of the branch network and the head office's move from London to the West Midlands.

The bank has also set aside £76 million against its interest-rate swap contracts with local authorities. £16 million more than most estimates. TSB was a leader in swap business with councils, and the money covers all its agreements with more than 50 councils. Half the amount is for Hammersmith Council which has been unable to meet its commitments, and is facing legal action from a group of

banks. The case goes to the Court of Appeal next week.

"I'm rather hot about this subject," said Sir Nicholas Goodison, the chairman. "I was brought up in a world where contract meant contract."

Profits at the bank, which fell 15

per cent to £289 million, were hit by £11 million rise in bad debt provisioning. This included £9 million for loans to two management buy-outs, believed to be Magnat and Lowndes Queensway.

There was also a £13 million

provision against Third World debts. TSB has very few of these, and its exposure has now fallen to less than £17 million, or 36 per cent of its nominal value.

Profits were also reduced by a £2 million loss at its estate agencies, compared with profits of 29 million last year, while a change in accounting led to gains profits falling by £23 million. A squeeze in margins on mortgage lending saw a further fall of £35 million, despite a 16 per cent rise in the total of loans outstanding to £5.66 billion.

The bank was also hit by a 20 per cent rise in staff costs to £655 million, as staff numbers swelled

by 3,600 to 45,800. The extra costs outweighed the business the bank gained in the year. The group's loan book grew by 29 per cent to £14.4 billion, while deposits grew 14 per cent to £21.5 billion. The biggest change in the loan book was a 50 per cent gain in corporate lending to £4.91 billion.

In contrast to the fall in profits in retail banking there was an increase in profits of 8 per cent to £86 million in the insurance and investment division. The commercial businesses, including Swan National car rental, rose by 26 million to £34 million.

In the past year since he became

chairman, Sir Nicholas has started a complete reorganization of the group. All the retail bank's operations have been grouped into one subsidiary, ending its previous federal structure and making it easier to manage. He has also halved the size of the board and sacked many senior managers. In November, TSB followed this by announcing up to 3,000 redundancies and a cut in the area office network from 50 to 21.

Mr Don McCracken, the group chief executive, said the reorganization that had started in the group meant the board could now manage the business.

Banks' £400m averts crisis at Eurotunnel

By John Bell, City Editor

Eurotunnel has confirmed that the funding crisis which threatened to halt work on the cross-Channel link is over.

Leaders of the 208-strong banking consortium backing the project have agreed to make available up to £400 million so that work can continue beyond the end of the month.

The release of fresh funds from the existing £5 billion loan facility follows an outline agreement between Eurotunnel and Transmanche Link, the Anglo-French construction company building the tunnel.

The two parties have three months to settle the fine print of the agreement — which brings to an end months of acrimonious dispute over the soaring costs of the project.

The outline agreement confirms that the final cost of all work will be £7.2 billion, including an unexpected provision for contingencies, and not the higher figure of more than £7.5 billion which had been claimed by TML.

TML and Eurotunnel also confirmed that the completion date remains June 1993. The updated forecasts are to be published in April.

The lead banks have accepted the TML-Eurotunnel accord and recommend it to the full consortium.

Final acceptance by the bankers is expected early in February and will pave the way for a further fund raising of about £1.6 billion by the end of the year. A quarter of

these funds will be provided through a rights issue of equity or subordinated debt. A statement from Mr Andrew Richard and Mr Alastair Morton, Eurotunnel's joint chairmen, welcomes both agreements.

But they say there is a need for further improvements to the efficiency of the construction and single out the slower-than-expected progress made by the five British

Comment... 25

members of the TML consortium, BICC, Costain, Tarmac, Taylor Woodrow and Wimpey.

The French marine tunnel is running up to 14 weeks ahead of schedule, say the co-chairmen, but "the British marine running tunnels are only just starting to make respectable progress and are now three to four months behind schedule."

A statement from Eurotunnel says most of the issues in dispute with the builders have been resolved

The co-chairmen say that vigorous attention will be paid to cost cutting and Eurotunnel is slicing its supervision overhead by 25 per cent. The reduction of the shuttle train maximum running speed, part of the cost-saving programme, can be accomplished without sacrifice to capacity or revenue, they added. This will be achieved by using more powerful locomotives.

TML, which is contractually prevented from commenting on the project, is believed to regard the agreement with Eurotunnel as satisfactory, but is clearly expecting to recover the full £380 million in dispute on lump sum works through arbitration.

TML is thought to regard the rise in the agreed cost of target works as fair compensation for the extra exposure to cost overruns. A key factor was, in TML's view, Eurotunnel cutting its own costs.

It offers document says that the cash will initially be used to reduce the group's borrowings, currently about a third of shareholders' funds.

He added that the arrangements would "create the strongest possible platform for the effective and profitable distribution of Toyota's vehicles in Britain for the next 18 years."

At the same time, Toyota will subscribe for 4.7 per cent of Inchcape itself, at 287p a share, a 5 per cent discount to its market price before the

in statement released in Tokyo, Mr Shiochiyo Toyoda, Toyota's president, said:

"Now that we are making a substantial investment in

Engineer takes £9m majority stake in Riva

Model purchase: Ghos Gervasoni, president of Riva, and Peter Ward, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars' chief executive, yesterday

Vickers powers into luxury boats

By Derek Harris, Industrial Editor

That Rolls-Royce among power boats, the Italian-produced Riva, is being acquired by Vickers, of which Rolls-Royce Motors itself is a subsidiary.

And Vickers has made a good deal in securing 75 per cent of the privately owned Riva company for £9.1 million. Riva had pre-tax profits last time of £2.5 million on sales of £19.8 million, in a luxury market which has been growing and which is expected to expand further.

Riva powerboats have included heads of state like King Hussein and the Aga Khan and entertainers like Rod Stewart and Joan Collins. In the deal, a 55 per cent stake has been sold by Schroders' Italian Venture Fund. Some of the remaining 20 per cent sold includes holdings by Riva family interests.

Management and workers, who hold

some of the remaining shares, have apparently been enthusiastic about Vickers moving in because it can give the operation the kind of big-company financial backing it needs.

Riva

was founded by the family in 1842 and it builds up to 60 powerboats a year at a modern facility on Lake Iseo near Milan with 120 employees, many of them highly skilled craftsmen. Last November Riva bought a controlling interest in Campanella, whose boatyard near Genoa has given Riva extra capacity and the facilities for building larger craft.

Riva

claims to be Europe's premier maker of luxury power boats in the 26-to-60-ft range. Prices range from £17,000 to £1.5 million.

Its new Riva 32 has been developed

Toyota to take Inchcape stake

By Michael Tate, London, and Joe Joseph, Tokyo

Toyota, Japan's biggest car manufacturer, has agreed to take a 4.7 per cent stake in Inchcape, its British distributor, as part of a £110 million deal that will cement relationships between the two groups until well into the 21st century.

The deal, under which Toyota will eventually take a controlling interest in Toyota (GB), its British distributing subsidiary, comes as the Japanese group prepares to build its first factories in Britain, in a move expected to double Toyota sales here by 1995.

As a key element of the deal, Toyota (GB) has been awarded exclusive rights to distribute Toyota vehicles in Britain for the next 18 years. The agreement not only removes any doubts about

announcements. This investment, described by both parties as "symbolic" and accompanied by a standstill agreement, is worth £50.4 million.

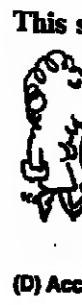
Sir George Turnbull, Inchcape's chairman and chief executive, who described the agreement as "both unique and historic," said the cash will initially be used to reduce the group's borrowings, currently about a third of shareholders' funds.

He added that the arrangements would "create the strongest possible platform for the effective and profitable distribution of Toyota's vehicles in Britain for the next 18 years."

In a statement released in Tokyo, Mr Shiochiyo Toyoda, Toyota's president, said:

"Now that we are making a substantial investment in

Britain, the further development of



* BARA Gascoin in Brixton sent me 836 989; P17.45c 2.30pm 1
* DIVE! White lock Simeon's season. Playhouse Ave, WC Embankment next Tue 21st.

* A LIFE Elliott an study of junior: th Strand T 2650, Ti 8pm, Ma 23-24.6

* LONE Eddie Angelina's products Theatres SW1 (01) Circus, 3-5.10pm

* NOEL and Sims in Shrewsbury Lane, Comedy SW1 (01) Circus, Wed 3pm

* PRIME Autohaus principle Lyric Th 457 360 Mon-Fri 10.45pm

* A STI version Holmes' Gossamer (01-863-1 Mon-Sat Mon-Fri 25.50, R

LONG RT Theatre Uisneach Theatre My Ght 7.13... Thurs 1 House 1443... Open 1.224... Whitsun 1119... Victoria 1

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Supplies

Stages in the £70 million strengthening for the Severn Bridge, which carries 50,000 vehicles on an average day. Raising the four towers by an inch is believed to be an engineering first.

By Nick Nuttall
Technology Correspondent.

In what is believed to be a unique engineering operation, workers last night began raising the twin towers of the Severn Bridge to allow it to take the strain of traffic increases until 2110. Over the next eight weeks, engineers will add about six inches to the four 400ft towers. It is the

final phase of a £70 million project to strengthen the 1½-mile bridge. The work has been planned to avoid disruption to traffic on the M4 carriageways linking England and Wales. The operation will bring more than 2,000 tonnes of pressure to bear across four points at the base of the towers as the top rises at their bases. To ensure that the columns do not ant wobble or slide during the lift, braces have been bolted to the inside of the towers at intervals of about 20 feet. At the midpoints of the towers, steel reinforcements

will take the pressure of the rising columns and ensure that the steel rods do not burst through the top. During the operation, steel wedges will be inserted to support the jacks as the columns rise by fractions of an inch each day. When the task is completed, the jacks will be removed and the wedges will take the full force. The bridge, the world's seventh longest, was opened by the Queen in September 1966.

UDA leader 'held for questioning by Stevens'

By Edward Gorman
Irish Affairs Correspondent

Mr Tommy Lyttle, the West Belfast leader of the Protestant paramilitary Ulster Defence Association, was arrested early yesterday for questioning by the Stevens inquiry, his family said.

Reports said Mr Lyttle was among four "loyalists" arrested in dawn operations in Belfast by RUC officers acting on behalf of the inquiry led by Mr John Stevens, deputy chief constable of Cambridgeshire, into allegations of collu-

sion between Protestant paramilitaries and security force members.

The arrests, which official police sources refused to confirm, are the second batch this year for the Stevens team. Last week a number of "loyalists" were detained, some of whom were being charged yesterday with offences connected with alleged leaks of security documents and "associated matters".

Mr Lyttle is on the UDA's so-called "inner council" and is regarded as the most influential figure in the organization.

Meanwhile, a fire which badly

damaged the headquarters of the Stevens team late on Wednesday evening was being described in some reports as an accident but there was widespread speculation that it may have been started deliberately.

The fire, at offices in the Sea Park complex at Carrickfergus, east of Belfast, was discovered at about 10.45pm. It was confined to the main operations room where files of evidence, cabinets and computer terminals were damaged or destroyed. In a statement, the police described the damage as extensive.

It said the cause was yet not

known. Stevens' officers had been in the room until 10pm when they locked it. Other members of the team who came on duty 45 minutes later discovered the fire.

In a separate statement, Mr Stevens attempted to head off the inevitable speculation about arson. He emphasized that the fire had started in a locked room and, despite the damage, "would not impede the current investigation" or the "vigorous progress of the enquiry". He said that all records and files had been duplicated.

The Stevens team has been

operating from an old factory now owned by the Northern Ireland police authority which is under permanent armed guard.

A soldier appeared before magistrates in Belfast yesterday accused of trying to murder policemen arresting of 28 Ulster Defence Regiment soldiers on behalf of the Stevens enquiry last October.

John Miskell, aged 22, of St Leonard's Crescent, Belfast, who is a full-time soldier in the Royal Irish Rangers, is alleged to have fired shots at police. No one was injured. He was remanded in custody.

Union fear as ambulance crews strike

Continued from page 1
dispute." Mr Poole said: "I know they are angry but we are going to win this dispute by exercising the power of the people."

With crews in Hampshire also planning to hold a series of 24-hour strikes the leadership knows that the overwhelming public support it

enjoys could be seriously undermined.

At first crews at four West Sussex stations, Crawley, East Grinstead, Horsham and Littlehampton walked out on strike. The crews at Horsham and Littlehampton later returned to report for limited duty within TUC guidelines.

Mr Andy Lawrence, spokes-

man for the ambulance workers at Crawley, said six 999 calls had been put through to the station during the morning but crews had refused to deal with them. "They were told their pay would be stopped so we walked out."

Mr Alan Randall, district general manager for the Worthing health authority, which

covers the area's ambulance service, said: "We condemn this action. It is unjustified."

After the London sit-in, Mr Crosby accused the unions of trying to take over the control room at the headquarters.

Army ambulances were called out in Surrey and Essex and were also ready for action in Oxfordshire.

Continued from page 1
in Vilnius towards midday and did not attend the rally, is visiting Lithuania in an attempt to solve the impasse created by Lithuania's decision to create a Communist Party independent from Moscow. On one of his now traditional walkabouts, he urged Lithuanians to relin-

quish their suspicion of Moscow and remain within a reformed Soviet Union.

He suggested that on the question of the Lithuanian party's independence, his mind was made up, but that there was room for a degree of flexibility. "I'm not going to change my attitude and position," he told the crowd. "We

have to modernize the cultural, political and economic ties between our different republics instead of just destroying everything. Therefore we need a totally different federation where political sovereignty is fully guaranteed.

"If we give you economic independence and you suddenly switch on to world market prices you'll end up in a muddle," he said.

Although the Soviet leader's arrival had been postponed for a day and the time of his arrival had not been announced, huge crowds gathered in the city centre.

Mr Gorbatchov and his wife Raissa laid flowers at the foot of a statue of Lenin.

Matthew Parris

THE TIMES CROSSWORD PUZZLE NO 18,189

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ACROSS
1 Report one new bird — a peacock? (8).
5 Moralist's telegraphic message for sailor (6).
10 A ringleader in plot is revealed (5).
11 Change partners, since in vehicle (9).
12 Girl with long way to go in high-class university sci (3-6).
13 Poet has Goldsmith's material to study (5).
14 Some players on leave (7).
16 Voice, possibly, I have on legislation (6).
19 Start to grow one inside, yielding plenty (6).
21 Jack leading heroic characters into walled town (7).
23 Name in order, alphabetically (5).
25 Craft are moored in a landing-place (9).
27 Mr Winkle, for example, is a master of the dramatic bon-mot (9).

28 From Irish house I brought back epic tale (5).
29 Angelic sort, perhaps, losing one penny in change (6).
30 Senselessness of a French cause (8).
DOWN
1 Host removed, so to speak, from party in US (8).
2 Social barrier that divides neighbours (5,4).
3 Jog, like a streaker, around midnight (5).
4 One related, say, information that produces defensive reaction (7).
6 Transient changes immediately resulting (9).
7 Not a main thoroughfare? It is in Oxford (5).
8 More or less dotty cloak (6).
9 Means for producing pictures occurred to artist (6).
15 Hated new carriage creating dangerous situation (5-4).
17 Wins against one hundred politicians (9).
18 Divinity can be puzzle, I assume (8).
20 Calamitous end of aircraft shown by rising smoke (6).
21 Various creatures Alice upset in trying circumstances (7).
22 Disorder occurs in plant (6).
24 Reduce the glare (5).
26 Latecomer's last in joint effort (5).

The solution to Puzzle No 18,188 will appear on Monday, January 22

WORD-WATCHING

A daily safari through the language jungle. Which of the possible definitions is correct?

By Philip Howard

NOMS DE GUERRE

a. Virgi
b. Pindar
c. Herod

PRINCE FLORIZEL

a. George IV
b. Oscar Wilde

c. The Young Pretender

LAST OF THE ROMANS

a. Julian the Apostate

b. Beethoven

c. Maximiliani

Answers on page 20

AA ROADWATCH

For the latest AA traffic and roadworks information, 24 hours a day, dial 0836 401 followed by the appropriate code.

London & SE traffic, roadworks

C. London (within N & S Circs.) 731

M-ways/roads M4-M1 732

M-ways/roads M23-M25 733

M25 London Orbital only 735

National traffic and roadworks

C. London (within N & S Circs.) 731

M-ways/roads M1-Dartford T 733

M-ways/roads M23-M25 733

M25 London Orbital only 735

Midlands 740

East Anglia 741

North-West England 742

Wales 743

Scotland 744

Northern Ireland 745

AA Roadwatch is charged at 5p for 8 seconds (peak and standard) 5p for 12 seconds (off peak).

— denotes Wednesday's figures are latest available

These are Wednesday's figures.

ABROAD

MONDAY: 1-thunder; 2-drizzle; 3-fog; 4-sun;

5-snow; 6-snow; 7-fair; 8-cloud; 9-rain

C. France 746

Alps 747

Provence 748

Paris 749

Normandy 750

Brittany 751

Channel Islands 752

Spain 753

Portugal 754

Italy 755

Greece 756

Albania 757

Yugoslavia 758

Croatia 759

Balkans 760

Black Sea 761

Russia 763

Central Asia 764

Kazakhstan 765

Uzbekistan 766

Turkmenistan 767

Afghanistan 768

Iran 769

Pakistan 770

India 771

Bangladesh 772

Sri Lanka 773

Maldives 774

China 775

Tibet 776

North Korea 777

South Korea 778

Japan 779

Southern 'not worried' by 13% MAM stake

By Graham Scarjeant, Financial Editor

Mr William Courtney, chairman of Southern Water, said he was not concerned at the 13 per cent shareholding built up by funds invested by Mercury Asset Management, by far the biggest stake disclosed in a privatized water group.

Unfortunately, the company is no longer firm of cylinders. The warning of October that first-half costs would suffer a setback, has come true. Pre-tax profits are down by 6 per cent to £1.46 million and earnings by 7 per cent to 11.6p. A similar concern has now come full-year figures.

For once, both the textile and electrical sides have terms at the same time. Mr Jones Stroud closed its financial core narrow fabrics business because of competition from imports, while closing in the fall in stocking sales due to the hot summer. Domestic appliance makers have met their requirements for lead time at a time when customers in the power generation industry are already dependent.

Full-year profits of £1 million and earnings of 11.6p would leave the shares at 10 on a prospective price-to-earnings ratio of 10 and the yield on a 13p is 4.6 per cent. It is as solid as ever, but it looks as if earnings are going to stay on a plateau for the next 18 months or so.

MAM is the 75 per cent

owned investment subsidiary of SG Warburg Group, whose securities business was broker to the Government for water privatization and played the leading role through its market-making operations, in breaking up the packages of water shares initially sold to financial institutions.

Southern will, however, send out statutory notices to find out who its shareholders are once an up-to-date share register is received, probably at the end of January.

Yorkshire Water, in which MAM has an 8 per cent stake, said it did not know if other substantial stakes had been bought. But it would find out who its leading shareholders were and approach pension funds and insurance companies from February to try to build a relationship and create loyalty.

It has also bought 10 per cent of Northumbrian, in whose region Lyonnaise has

Four more of the privatized

large interests, but where the French group did not buy shares just after flotation, Mr David Cranston, finance director of Northumbrian, also said his company was relaxed about the MAM stake.

There was also speculation that Yorkshire and South West, where MAM has accumulated 10 per cent, were targets of Compagnie Générale des Eaux, the biggest French water group. The third, Saur, bought control of three private water companies in the Southern area, in which Southern picked up blocking 25 per cent minority stakes.

Since then, however, Saur and Southern have come together in Stalwart Environmental Services, which has bid for local authority waste disposal contracts.

South West made £17.8 million before extraordinary costs of only £1.5 million and Northumbrian recorded £3.8 million before privatization costs of £2.5 million.

Pact for hotel group is rejected

By Stephen Leather

Lady (Eileen) Joseph has suggested a compromise pact to resolve the struggle for control of Norfolk Capital, the hotel group in which she holds a crucial 7 per cent stake.

Balmoral, the recently-formed international hotels group based in Edinburgh, wants Norfolk's shareholders to elect three of its executives to the main board and to force the managing director, Mr Peter Eyles, to resign.

Lady Joseph, widow of Sir Donald Joseph and mother of Tony Good, a director controlling about 3 per cent of Norfolk equity, has been vehemently rejected by both sides.

Mr Tyrie, who built up

Glencaigles Hotels in Scotland and the Mandarin Oriental group in the Far East, said that Mr Eyles' resignation was necessary for the restructuring of Norfolk Capital.

Norfolk's chairman, Mr Tony Richmond-Watson, said that Mr Tyrie could become an active competitor, and that he and Mr Eyles considered Lady Joseph's idea as "totally impracticable".

Mr Tyrie wants shareholders to appoint himself and his colleagues, Mr Michael Williams and Mr Colin Wearmouth, to the board so that they can turn Norfolk into a five-star hotel group, without a full takeover bid, and sell its non-core public house and leisure interests.

Mr Tyrie said: "We have identified that there are a lot of assets in Norfolk which largely don't work for the shareholder."

Balmoral, with almost 13 per cent of Norfolk's biggest shareholder, Norfolk shareholders will vote on Mr Tyrie's proposals at a meeting on January 29.

The Balmoral men are in London making presentations to institutions, who hold some 60 per cent of Norfolk's equity. They are also telephoning small shareholders.

Mr Richmond-Watson said: "The management of a listed company by another company is entirely inappropriate."

Balmoral hopes to persuade shareholders to pay a £500,000 annual fee, and performance-based payments of up to £7 million.

COMMENT The lesson to be learned from Eurotunnel agony

It has been easy for those who hanker for a return of corporatism Britain to find a failure of private enterprise in the tribulations of Eurotunnel. The costs of the project have spiralled, progress has been slower than expected and there have even been suggestions that it may fail altogether. These depressing facts have a familiar ring to those who recall the fate of some recent large-scale publicly financed projects — the nuclear power station programme has contained some prime examples. Yet the highly public and acrimonious dispute over costs between Eurotunnel, which has the concession to operate the project, and Transmanche Link, the construction consortium building it, is evidence that the discipline of the market place, far from failing, is alive and working.

TML and Eurotunnel have also agreed on a cost containment programme and confirmed the 1993 completion date.

The final cost emerges at £7.2 billion assuming completion is on target, including the unspecified contingency provisions. Eurotunnel's bankers are agreed in principle to a fund-raising of about £1.2 billion, and should confirm so by early next month.

Barring the cloud over arbitration, and the possibility of tough bank terms for the extra funding, the tunnel's prospects look brighter now. This is just as well. A failure would have threatened many privately funded infrastructure projects in the planning or ideas stage.

There are, though, some lessons for the future. Much of the recent agony generated by the row over Eurotunnel costs could have been avoided or minimized at an earlier stage in the proceedings by a swifter separation of the roles of promoter and constructor. The builders planned and managed the early stages of the scheme and had a large say in the contract. At that time, Eurotunnel was still controlled by the companies which now form TML. There is inevitably a conflict of interest between an operator like Eurotunnel and the contractors of a project which should be recognized long before costings and contracts are prepared. It may be an exaggeration to say that TML agreed the contract with itself, but not much of one.

Closer attention to the details of planning, design and management before work was seriously under way by those with Eurotunnel shareholders' interests solely in mind could have avoided most of Eurotunnel's recent difficulties. If that lesson is well taken, future ventures will find risk capital easier to arrange.

Warning signs for Major

The sharp rise in receivables is as graphic evidence as any that the credit squeeze is working, and of exactly how it is working. Receivables accelerated sharply in the fourth quarter, rising more than 70 per cent against the comparable quarter of 1988 compared with a 38 per cent rise over the year as a whole. The figure for London and the South-east, which accounted for more than half the total receivables, was up 94 per cent in the last quarter against 52 per cent for the year. By contrast, there were actually fewer receivables in the year in Scotland and the South-west and the total was little changed in the North-west.

If this is a big, painful shakeout, it is at least a healthy one. Leaner, fitter manufacturers have fared relatively well, while service industries in the overcooked South-east, notably property and retailers of carpets, furniture and the like, have suffered most. Tim Hayward, of Peat Marwick McLintock, who produced the comprehensive survey, says things are still getting worse, but are nowhere near as bad as in the mid-Eighties and largely affect smaller firms from an abundant new crop.

The message is clear. Little irreparable damage has so far been done by the squeeze, which looks a reasonable cost for cutting inflation. But the warning signs are there that the Chancellor should not squeeze a moment longer than necessary.

Squeeze on inflation postponed

The squeeze on companies necessary to reduce inflation below 5 to 6 per cent has been postponed, probably until after the next election, and the permitted fall in sterling has undermined government policy against inflation, says Mr Donald Franklin, chief economist of Schroders.

In the bank's latest *Economic Perspective*, he writes that the pound could prove vulnerable this year, if interest rates are lowered.

James Capel, the broker, says in its January economic assessment that the 6 per cent fall in sterling's effective exchange rate since Mr Nigel Lawson's resignation could hardly have come at a worse time for inflation.

Norex link

Norex has become part of a European network of insurance brokers placing risks for multinational companies. Its Lloyd's broking arm has joined a consortium of French, Italian and Dutch groups.

BP steel order

BP has ordered 30,000 tonnes of steel plate worth £15 million from British Steel to build gasfield sea platforms.

In the black

Multitone Electronics has turned a loss of £290,000 into a pre-tax profit of £73,000. Sales rose to £10.1 million.

NatWest eyes EC targets

By Neil Bennett

Lord Alexander of Weedon, chairman of National Westminster Bank, says the bank is looking for acquisitions or joint ventures in Europe in preparation for 1992.

In his first public appearance since taking over last October, he announced in a speech in Brussels that the bank wanted to expand its operations in the EC. It is looking at alliances and marketing agreements as well as outright acquisitions. He stressed, however, that the search was at an early stage and refused to reveal any possible targets.

Mr John Tagwell, the bank's international business chief executive, said the Nat-West was more interested in taking stakes in broad-based financial service companies than acquiring a retail bank.

Lord Alexander was in Brussels on a two-day visit to talk to Sir Leon Brittan, the competition and financial services commissioner, and other commission officials about Europe's banking industry.

NatWest already has one of the most advanced European networks of any British bank, employing more than 1,000 people in 10 of the 12 EC member states.

The chairman also said he supported Britain's entry into the EC's exchange rate mechanism, and that the question should be resolved sooner rather than later.

But he called for a reduction in interest rates to bring them into line with Europe before this could be achieved.



On the look-out: Lord Alexander, chairman of NatWest

Daily Mail Trust reports £113.3m

By Colin Campbell

Costs of moving from Fleet Street to new editorial and printing premises, coupled with other reorganizations, cost The Daily Mail and General Trust a gross £75.4 million in the year ended September 30.

The Daily Mail and General Trust, owner of two national newspapers and other local papers and now remodelled as a company following its earlier acquisition of Associated Newspapers Holdings, shows pre-tax profits of £113.3 million.

The Daily Mail and General Trust's trading profit of £56.9

million was made up of profits of £60.4 million from newspapers and magazines less a debit of £3.5 million from other activities.

Exceptional items totalled £60.3 million — made up of a £181.9 million profit on the sale of investments but offset by reorganization and redundancy costs of £75.4 million, a £29.7 million write-down on investments, and a £16.5 million debit covering special pension contributions.

The year's total dividend of

100p compares with a previous total payment of 75p a share.

The group added that circulation of the *Daily Mail* was "slightly down" year on year but was holding up well, while circulation of the *Mail on Sunday* remained in an upward trend.

Control of the Daily Mail and General Trust lies with the Harmsworth family, holding 72 per cent of the votes. The non-voting shares rose by £1 to £61 each.

Stingy Rowe row bubbles on

City gents have been grumbling into their champagne glasses after learning that Rowe & Pitman had quibbled with the all-too-modest request for a case of champagne from Martin Ritchie, the young chartered surveyor who found — and returned — bonds to the value of £4 million. Indeed, Simon Hughes, the Member of Parliament for Bermondsey, yesterday tabled an early day motion to "commend" his honesty and to urge Rowe & Pitman to give him "a reward slightly more appropriate to the amount of money he saved them." He suggested a figure of £2,500, to cover Ritchie's overdraft, while a leading loss adjuster suggested that 10 per cent of the amount recovered was the norm. Rowe & Pitman sent Ritchie, who works for Baker, Harris & Saunders, in Gutter Lane, a mere magnum of Laurent Perrier. But now, by way of a gesture, and in order to uphold the Square Mile's reputation for fostering an old-fashioned sense of style, a rival securities house — rumoured to be County NatWest WoodMac — has dispatched to his office the other 10 bottles of champagne necessary to at least fulfil Ritchie's original request for a case.

Life must be getting tough in the City. A pin-striped gent at a tube station in the Square Mile was overheard asking the ticket office clerk: "Is there such a thing as a cheap single?"

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

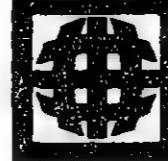
Global job for Lyon

Peter Lyons, a director at County NatWest WoodMac, responsible for asset allocation at County NatWest Investment Management for the past five years, has resigned and will be joining Smith New Court — as its global strategist — at the beginning of March. Lyon, aged 49, and also head of research at Vickers, before it merged with Scrimgeour, is described as a "very important appointment" by Mike Unsworth, head of research at SNC. "We appointed Paul Walton, from Warburgs, as our UK strategist and Peter completes the picture. He will

pull together all our strategic thoughts and liaise with Roger Nightingale, our chief international economist. Outside the US, we now research and trade in every major market in the world — and most of the minor ones as well." Meanwhile SNC has also just started its own smaller companies unit — by recruiting analysts Mary Fleming and Alastair Irving, and specialist salesman Owen Smythe, all from ANZ-McCaughan. They started on Monday. "Although we have a lot of corporate clients in this area, it is a new area for us," says Unsworth.

Double trouble
Tired and emotional financial hacks covering the YJ Lovell takeover bid for Higgs and Hill might well be forgiven for thinking they have seen double. For visitors to the Higgs and Hill front line have found themselves introduced to not one John Reynolds, but two. And sometimes by one to the other. The double-take is unavoidable because both Higgs and Hill's financial adviser, Schröders, and its public relations adviser, Shandwick, have a John Reynolds in the team. "It's been confusing for us, too," laughs the Shandwick man, a former *Exile* financial journalist. "I've had merchant bankers ringing me up and hailing me as a long lost friend, and my namesake has taken calls from chums of mine accusing him of being a drunken, old back."

Carol Leonard

This announcement appears as a matter of record only.

News International plc
US \$750,000,000
Credit Facility

Guaranteed by
The News Corporation Limited
and major subsidiaries

Provided by
Lloyds Bank Plc

Bank of America NT&SA
Midland Bank plc

Citibank, N.A.
Westpac Banking Corporation

Crédit Lyonnais
London Branch

The Bank of Nova Scotia
Commonwealth Bank of Australia

Standard Chartered Bank

Banco Central S.A.
London Branch

Deutsche Bank Aktiengesellschaft
London Branch

Agent Bank

Samuel Montagu & Co. Limited

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Waterford chief gives warning of closure

Mr Patrick Galvin, the chief executive of Waterford Wedgwood of Ireland, yesterday gave a warning that the company could collapse if its 2,000 crystal workers do not accept management cost-cutting plans. Industry sources say that Mr Tony O'Reilly, the chairman of H.J. Heinz, the US food group, has assembled a group of investors in his Fitzwilliam industrial holding group to bid for a 29.9 per cent stake — valued at £170 million (£66.5 million) — in Waterford.

This crystal and china group has estimated debts of £150 million and British and US sales have slumped. News of the proposed deal sent Waterford shares up by 4p to 57p on Monday. They slipped 1p to 56p yesterday.

No referral for BET bid

The Department of Trade and Industry will not refer the £192 million offer by BET, the specialist support services company, to Hestair to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. This week BET said it had won control of the consumer products group with a 52 per cent holding, or 30.6 million shares.

Hepworth expansion

Hepworth, the building products group, has announced a £15 million investment programme which will launch the group's largest division, Hepworth Building Products, into concrete pipe and manhole manufacturing by 1991. The move is designed to take advantage of the proposed improvements and extensions of Britain's roads and motorways.

A new plant, which will be built on a greenfield site at Ellistown, in Leicestershire, will have a stocking facility covering an area of 38,000 square metres, said to make it the largest and most cost-effective in Europe. The British large diameter market is expected to increase by 20 per cent over the next five years. The company says it is well positioned to take a significant share of this market.

Profits leap at Zetters

Zetters Group, the football pools promoter, saw a jump in pre-tax profits to £364,000 in the half-year to end-September, against last year's £114,000 which was depressed by the postal strike. The dividend is raised from 1.5p to 1.75p. Earnings per share trebled to 3.3p. Turnover was up from £10.9 million to £11 million.

Nobo hit by costs rise

Shares in Nobo Group, the office equipment and visual aids manufacturer, tumbled 40p to 160p after it reported a 39.5 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £1.17 million for the six months to end-October. Profits were hit by increased material costs and additional costs from the integration of the Velo stationary maker with Perforex. Increased borrowings led to a jump in interest payments from £94,000 to £155,000.

Earnings per share fell from 10.40p to 7.26p. However, the interim dividend is improved to 2.42p (2.2p). Turnover advanced by 38 per cent to £12.4 million, helped by continued growth in demand. Mr Peter Kent, the chairman, said trading conditions are reasonable and a stronger performance is expected in the second half.

Sock Shop sought quick sale of US stores, says rival

From James Bone, New York

Sock Shop International offered to sell its entire US operations for no cash down to its competitor, Leg Room, but suspended talks to pursue negotiations with a private investor, the British head of Leg Room alleged yesterday.

Mr Simon Abrahams, president of Leg Room, said: "They offered the whole American division because they wanted to save face with their stockholders in London and said I could take it for no cash down."

Mr Abrahams claimed that he had requested more details about the company's 17 US stores, which were abruptly closed after the Christmas sales last month, but they were not supplied. This decision was made by Sock Shop's management, which did not draw enough of a crowd.

Mr Eric Smith, a sock designer who supplied Sock Shop, said the company may have made an error by going into expensive areas where the volume of business could not justify New York's high rents.

Fourteen of Sock Shop's US units were in New York City.

Sock Shop also faced an increasingly crowded market as small copy-cat companies tried to imitate in the US its success in Britain.

The identity of Sock Shop's potential US partner remains a closely guarded secret.

Mr Barnard said that Sock Shop was too small in the US for large retail chains or manufacturers to be interested. It would be an "investment opportunity".

Once one of Britain's most successful retailers, Sock Shop is in negotiations with a potential partner who would provide a cash infusion to reopen the closed stores and expand its US business.

But analysts and industry sources said that the company, which has 121 shops in Europe, including 105 in

the United States, is in

difficulty.

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WALL STREET

Dow up 11 points on bargain-hunting

New York (Reuter) — The Dow Jones industrial average was ahead by 11 points to 2,761.64 in early trading, and in the broader market rising shares outnumbered declining issues by almost two to one.

Bargain-hunting — which began to appear late on Wednesday — and futures-related buying pushed shares in the main market higher, but blue chips were off their opening highs.

Trading was relatively quiet. Traders said that the thin trading exaggerated light orders. Some expected a decline in the market soon. Prime Motor Inns sank 3% to 16½ in active dealings. An analyst at Shearson has lowered her rating on the issue.

• Tokyo — The Nikkei index soared 473.62 points, or 1.26

per cent, to 38,170.13, so regaining its hold on the key 38,000 level after slipping below it on Tuesday. The 38,000 level was passed for the first time on December 13. Index-linked buying in the afternoon pushed the Nikkei sharply higher at the close, but trading was modest and the overall market rose less dramatically.

• Sydney — The All-Ordinaries index closed 5.9 up at 1,695.6.

• Frankfurt — The DAX index ended 16.20 higher at 1,855.83.

• Hong Kong — The Hang Seng index lost 12.48 to 2,855.52. The Hong Kong index shed 8.16 to 1,874.16.

• Singapore — The revamped Straits Times industrial index rose 3.45 to 1,566.07.

• London — The FTSE 100 index closed 11.10 higher at 1,385.10.

• Paris — The CAC 40 index closed 1.10 higher at 3,525.50.

• Amsterdam — The AMX index closed 1.10 higher at 1,025.50.

• Berlin — The DAX 30 index closed 1.10 higher at 1,025.50.

• Milan — The FTSE Mib index closed 1.10 higher at 1,025.50.

• Madrid — The IBEX 35 index closed 1.10 higher at 1,025.50.

• Stockholm — The OMX 30 index closed 1.10 higher at 1,025.50.

• Copenhagen — The KOB index closed 1.10 higher at 1,025.50.

• Dublin — The ISEQ 20 index closed 1.10 higher at 1,025.50.

• Oslo — The OSE 20 index closed 1.10 higher at 1,025.50.

• Zurich — The Swiss 20 index closed 1.10 higher at 1,025.50.

• London — The FTSE Small Stocks index closed 1.10 higher at 1,025.50.

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STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES

Rally after nervous start

ACCOUNT DAYS: Dealings began December 27. Dealings end today. Conjang day January 15. Settlement day January 22. Forward bargains are permitted on two previous business days.

Prices recorded are at market close. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Where one price is quoted, it is a middle price. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices. (as) denotes Alpha Stocks. (VOLUMES: PAGE 27).

Portfolio

PLATINUM

From your Portfolio Platinum card check your eight share price movements on this page only. Add them up to give you your overall total and check this against the daily dividend figure. If it matches you have won outright or a share of the daily prize money stated. If you win, follow the instructions on the back of your card. Always keep your card available when claiming. Game rules appear on the back of your card.

No.	Company	Group	Gross or less
1	Hawkins	Banks, Discount	
2	Deacons	Property	
3	Ward Group	Building, Roads	
4	Chancery	Banks, Discount	
5	Yorkshire TV	Leisure	
6	Ulsterair (as)	Oil, Gas	
7	HTV Group	Leisure	
8	Braunier	Industries A-D	
9	Sulphur Speckman	Chemicals, Plas.	
10	Lon & Metro	Property	
11	LASMO (as)	Oil, Gas	
12	Summer Inn	Industries S-Z	
13	Crown (T)	Motors, Aircraft	
14	Read Int (as)	Newspapers, Pub	
15	Allied-Lyons (as)	Breweries	
16	HTR (as)	Industries A-D	
17	Unit Bequests (as)	Foods	
18	All Food (as)	Foods	
19	Iceland Fresh	Foods	
20	Douglas (RM)	Building, Roads	
21	Lovell (Y)	Building, Roads	
22	Brail Bros	Foods	
23	Traws Perkins	Building, Roads	
24	Westgate	Banks, Discount	
25	Microfilm Repro	Electricals	
26	Barbour Index	Newspapers, Pub	
27	Pilkington (as)	Industries L-R	
28	CRH	Building, Roads	
29	Fancy Group	Industries E-K	
30	Admiral Comp	Electricals	
31	Volts	Electricals	
32	Seaville	Property	
33	Jenner (S)	Textiles	
34	Spring Ram	Industries S-Z	
35	Bardon Group	Building, Roads	
36	Rolls-Royce (as)	Motors, Aircraft	
37	Microgen	Electricals	
38	Total	Textiles	
39	Honda Motor	Motors, Aircraft	
40	Woodington	Leisure	
41	Shell (as)	Oil/Gas	
42	Jones & Shipman	Industries E-K	
43	Kwik Save	Foods	
44	Lucas (as)	Motors, Aircraft	
50	Times Newspapers Ltd.	Daily Total	

Please take into account any minus signs

Weekly Dividend						
Please make a note of your daily totals for the weekly dividend of £8,000 in tomorrow's newspaper.						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

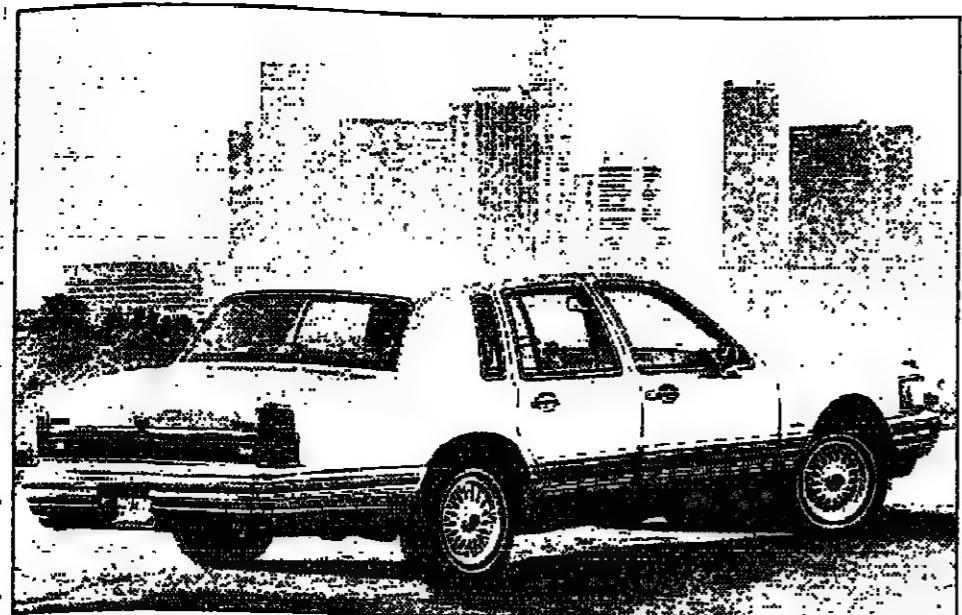
BRITISH FUNDS

		In Gross	Per cent
High	Low	Stock	Price
SHORTS (Under Five Years)			
FIVE TO FIFTEEN YEARS			
94% 95% Fund	31/4 1990-04	84%	84 11.675
95% 96% Conv	85/4 1990-04	85	85 11.675
95% 97% Conv	10/4 1990-04	85	85 11.675
95% 98% Conv	11/4 1990-04	85	85 11.675
95% 99% Conv	12/4 1990-04	85	85 11.675
95% 100% Conv	13/4 1990-04	85	85 11.675
95% 101% Conv	14/4 1990-04	85	85 11.675
95% 102% Conv	15/4 1990-04	85	85 11.675
95% 103% Conv	16/4 1990-04	85	85 11.675
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MOTORING

Japan struts its stuff

Talk at America's top motor show was of the lead another country has taken in innovative design and, now, sales. Daniel Ward, in Detroit, finds out why



Is length synonymous with luxury? The Lincoln has the status, but not all the top features

All flash, no finesse

For the price of a Rover Sterling in America you could own the latest Lincoln Town Car, an old-fashioned big brother to the impressive Lincoln Continental. The Town Car is proof that rich Americans will always need a huge car to let everyone know they are rich. A Japanese model simply will not do. Americans love Hounds but size means status, so the 18ft 3in Lincoln has an obvious appeal. This gas guzzler is longer than its predecessor.

It may have neat curves where once there were fins and acres of chrome, but the Town Car is dated under that new skin. As one of the last cars to boast a separate chassis, it also has such unfriendly luxury car features as rear drum brakes and a crude live rear axle. It is one car the Japanese would not attempt to copy.

There is a pre-idential air to this limousine as it waffles gently along at a steady speed. The V8 engine is capable of

The Lincoln is a long stretch from European luxury car, but they love it in the States

drawing close to two tons of mass away from traffic lights. It has no more power, however, than a European 2 litre.

From the driver's seat of a Rolls-Royce there is an impressive lofty view of the world, but the Lincoln owner has to make do with slumping low on an uncomfortable leather-look plastic seat. All that are missing are the star spangled banners.

Driving the Lincoln briskly is not the nightmare of feather-light steering and spongy suspension that might be expected. Agile it certainly is not, yet the Town Car floats along quite happily without being in danger of tipping film

stars in the back seat on to the carpet. There have been improvements but everything is relative.

The American penchant for "stretched" limousines is due, in part, to the disappointing lack of room in the back of Detroit's large cars. The Town Car is wide enough to take six.

You could not claim that the Lincoln was expensive, but if the makers did save any money, it must have been on the interior, which is hard to recognize as different from the brash, gilty offerings of the 1960s. The driver is presented with an acre of chrome switches and levers, all housed in cheap "wood effect" metal.

To underline the chasm between European and Japanese luxury cars and those from Detroit, an American car magazine has just voted the Lincoln Town Car, car of the year. America is a long way from ending its love affair with big, blash cars.

Daniel Ward

THE LATEST FROM THE LAND OF STARS AND STRIPES

■ The need to depress the clutch before turning the ignition key is now a feature of many American cars with manual gearboxes. Similarly, automatic cars will only start when the brake pedal is pressed by the driver.

■ Central locking on American Ford's no longer operates the rear doors, following many attacks on lone drivers. An assailant could crawl out of sight on the far side of car and

slip into the rear seat when the doors were unlocked.

■ Some Detroit petrol stations have acted against motorists who drive off without paying, by demanding the money first.

■ Air bags are fitted on many new American cars in preference to the cheaper, but immensely awkward motorized seat belts which automatically "fit" the diagonal part of the belt around the front seat occupant when the door has

been closed. One of the two systems is now mandatory in America. Ford and Chrysler are to fit air bags progressively to all models.

■ American car manufacturers estimate it would cost \$7.5 billion (about £3.6 billion) a year to comply with the Clean Air Act currently being discussed by the United States Congress, yet it is claimed the measures will improve air quality by less than 2 per cent.

To make this disparity worse, the American motorist keeps buying Detroit's large

Sales slipped 7 per cent in 1989, but worse was the thousands of dollars handed over to customers as cash rebates. Most manufacturers accept that it is no longer possible to sell cars in America at the list price. In 1990 the car industry will spend \$5 billion (about £2.9 billion) advertising its products and, probably, a similar amount in bonuses to dealers and rebates to customers.

As sales have slumped, so workers have been laid off. Detroit's big three car manufacturers closed 42 plants for a week or more last year. All the major Japanese firms increased US sales in 1989, which totalled 2.5 million cars and accounted for 26 per cent of the American market.

As the Japanese produce more cars in their US "transplant" factories, they are displacing Fords or Buicks.

Perhaps the clearest sign of the challenge facing Detroit is the fact that the Honda Accord was the best selling car in America in 1989. It is the first time a Japanese car has outsold a model from Chrysler, Ford or GM. Honda is in a position to sell one million cars in America by the mid-1990s.

The car industry must compete with Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) legislation that sets a minimum average fuel economy, which must be met by each maker's model range.

The Detroit manufacturers have to juggle building large, thirsty cars with their smaller models. By US standards, the Japanese sell mostly small cars and few luxury models, so they have no problem meeting CAFE limits.

To make this disparity worse, the American motorist keeps buying Detroit's large

gas guzzlers at a time when the CAFE minimum is about to be significantly increased. Baseball fans would call that a home run for the Japanese.

Against this background, the launch of the new Ford Escort was a significant event, as it gave the company an up-to-date economical model to offset some of the big V8 powered cars. The Escort is now much longer and wider than its European sister model. However, the most

significant point is that the new car was largely designed by Mazda. The Japanese firm also set up one of the two plants that will make the Escort, for many years a best seller in America.

When a Chrysler executive introduced a stunning new sports car at the show, he added honestly that he was sorry his firm had not produced it. It came from Mitsubishi — only the badges were changed. The Japanese

will never bother to compete with Detroit in the traditional large car sector. General Motors introduced the new Chevrolet Caprice, with enough seats for six. The distance from the rear wheels to the bumper is a match for a double-decker bus. The survival of the car-like live axle in the 1990s is remarkable.

Chuck Jordan, Cadillac's chief designer, says there are less customers for the GM division, so the Aurora con-

'The Nissan Gobi was fun and fresh. Alongside it, many of Detroit's ideas seemed dated before the public had even seen them'

cept car was aimed at a younger buyer. It is planned for production in the mid-1990s, but it is very hard to see how today's Cadillac owners would swap their chrome and acres of sheet metal for something so understated and compact.

The Detroit show's best concept car was wholly impractical, yet represents an innovative approach to coping with crowded roads. Chrysler's Voyager III is two vehicles in one. The front half is a three-seater micro-commuter car powered by a propane 1.6 litre engine.

Behind the small car is the rear module, which cannot be operated separately but can be locked on to the front. When it docks, the rear wheels of the micro car are electrically withdrawn like an aircraft pulling up its under-carriage. In total, there are eight seats. The rear section has its own engine which is electronically linked to the front unit.

The Voyager highlights a way in which one-car families can have a compact shopping car for city use and then a full-size car for holidays and outings.

Nissan's small pickup, the Gobi, was styled in America by the Japanese firm's US designers. So why can't American stylists produce better cars? The Nissan Gobi was fun and fresh with an unusual elliptical cab. Alongside the Gobi, many of Detroit's ideas seemed dated before the public had even seen them.

The exception was Ford's handsome Mercury Cyclone. Perhaps heavily influenced by Ford's Italian Ghia studio, it was, nevertheless, a clever and exciting four-seater rather than brash like the Pontiac counterpart.

The Cyclone's glass roof has an electrochromic layer which can be changed from transparent to opaque by adjusting an electrical current. Such a development could make the glass roof practical.

Lotus and Aston Martin launched the new Elan and Virage respectively for the American market and Rover unveiled its Oxford Edition Sterling.

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THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

Greater London Enterprise seeks private sector aid

By Martin Regan

Greater London Enterprise, an important source of venture capital for small businesses, is to invite private sector companies on to its board in an effort to dilute local authority control.

The move is the latest evidence of the restructuring by enterprise boards in an attempt to sidestep the proposed Housing and Local Authority Act. Under this, the boards – independent commercially-run companies created by local authorities to promote small business growth – will be treated as local authority-controlled and subject to stringent borrowing requirements.

The Greater London board has so far helped finance about 30 companies, including Palace Pictures, maker of *Mona Lisa* and *Scandal*. The plan to invite new members follows the failure of talks with the Co-operative Bank and Unity Trust, the trade union bank. Mr Richard Minns, joint chief executive, said: "We are being very cautious in our choice of new members and will be looking for like-minded organizations."

New directors will also be appointed to push local authority representation to less than 20 percent, the benchmark below which the new classification will not apply. The move follows the decision by Lancashire Enterprises, the country's largest and

most profitable board, to sell off 80 per cent of its shares.

Lancashire Enterprises pioneered the use of seed capital funds for high-risk, technology-led companies, helping a number to the Third Market. Last year, it recorded £300,000 pre-tax profits.

Greater Manchester Economic Development is examining the Lancashire scheme, but is likely to follow the Greater London route. The only casualty so far has been the Merseyside Enterprise Board which collapsed after the county's five boroughs failed to agree on a restructuring plan.

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I'll make the same resolution I made in 1980 – to take a holiday this decade

Right formula for health

By Brian Collett

A traditionally trained pharmacist with the right formula for a health shop may sound unusual, but Miss Rekha Koteka takes a far from conventional line on almost everything. And she usually succeeds.

Miss Koteka, a Ugandan Asian expelled by Idi Amin, the dictator, in 1972, began job-hunting the day after arriving in Britain. The daughter of an industrial family in the textiles business, she was used to hard work. However, instead of taking a job, she got her "A" levels and then a pharmacy degree.

Yet working as a chemist's pharmacist and later in a City partnership was not enough. She said: "I didn't want to work for anyone else any more." Thus she decided to use her skills for a health food business.

Miss Koteka requested an interview with the manager at her local Barclays Bank branch. He was too busy that day, so she told the bank to prepare her assets for withdrawal by 2.30pm. An interview was swiftly arranged with another branch manager, who granted the loan at acceptable rates, with her flat as security.

Miss Koteka was able to open her first shop in Old Brompton Road, west London, in March 1987.

Typical of her unconventional style, Miss Koteka believes certain constituents of diet are essential to avoid and fight illness and that as a pharmacist she has the biochemical knowledge to advise sensibly, not just sell products. For



Stocked for success: Rekha Koteka at her Earls Court Road store, where she offers advice on health

example, she tells her customers to take vitamin E and iron six hours apart, because the vitamin inhibits iron absorption. She treats all her customers as individuals, asking why they want health supplements, often suggesting more suitable ones, and checking whether they are on medication to avoid drug interaction. She even stocks products available only to doctors, nutritionists and pharmacists.

People had predicted she would fail in Old Brompton Road because the shop was in a bad location, but business passed break-even point on the first day. After 12 months, takings reached the level Miss Koteka had expected after five years.

As to her success, Miss Koteka said: "I offer a service. I stay open until seven days a week. My Earls Court store is the only health shop I know in London open until

10pm. It's not for the money. Somebody might want a plaster when everywhere else is shut. As a result, my customers know me and call me by my first name."

Even the name for her shop came about in an unorthodox way. She recalls: "When I was starting, I told myself I must be crazy. Then I realized I had the name – Health Craze."

Miss Koteka is now planning a naturopathy centre at the Earls Court shop, a central London store, a pure plant beauty centre and her own health products.

Her philosophy: "There is never yesterday for me, only tomorrow, and tomorrow has got to be better."

PR service finds a market in Moscow

By Derek Harris

Holder Swan Public Relations, a London agency headed by Miss Sylvie Holder and Miss Lindsay Swan, started seminars last September to tell small businesses how to run their own public relations, given that professional help could be too expensive.

The service, thought to be the only one of its kind, has proved so popular that the seminars are being held more frequently – and have been requested in Brussels and Moscow. The pair are also looking to courses in the British regions and as far afield as Hong Kong.

The seminars cost £150 for a day, plus VAT. So far half the people attending have been from London, with most of the rest from the regions and a sprinkling from abroad.

The seminar programme covers the essential ground – understanding the media, coping with interviews, planning a campaign, writing a media release – with a look at non-media sides of public relations such as brochures, exhibitions, mail shots and crisis management.

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A former England footballer tells Martin Trew of his enthusiasm for his new career in racing

Channon's sights on new goals

Mick Channon examined his damaged hand and laughed. Two weeks ago, with the ink barely dry on his Jockey Club trainer's licence, a horse had lashed out and caught the former football international smack on the knuckle. It was a reminder to Channon, who won 46 caps for England, that training racehorses is no safer than playing in the Football League.

Channon, whose memorable scoring career with Southampton, Manchester City, Newcastle United, Bristol City, Norwich City and Portsmouth was almost injury-free, will begin training in Lambourn next month with a string of four jumpers and 20 Flat horses. For the time being he is working as assistant to the Hampshire trainer, Ken Cunningham-Brown. For Channon, this is the final stage of an apprenticeship that began at 15 when he had his first bet. He backed Tintagel, trained near where he lived in Wiltshire, to win the Ebor.

This week, Channon was to be found supervising Cunningham-Brown's three-year-olds as they went through their paces at Danebury Place, where more than 100 years ago John Day set a record for the number of winners trained in a season. Channon issued instructions to the riders as they circled next to the ivy-covered ruin of the old Stockbridge racecourse grandstand. It was damp and cold but Channon, wearing a shorter haircut than in his playing days, was in his element. "I want you to come up this time," he told them. "Just let 'em breeze up together."

Channon is not the first leading footballer of the 1970s to become a trainer. Francis Lee took out a licence three years ago and was one of the North's leading Flat trainers last season with 27 winners. Channon said mockingly: "Franny didn't know what a flipping horse was when he was playing. But there's no big secret to training horses, especially moderate ones. Dedication is all that matters."

Nevertheless, the job does turn people grey, and Channon is entering the profession at a difficult time. Rising overheads and a shortage of experienced staff have forced several trainers out of the game in the last two years. In Lambourn alone, Ray Laing, Nick Vigors and Mark Smyly have all shut up shop. What is more, Channon will be operating at the lower end of the scale, with cheap horses, none of whom cost more than 10,000 guineas, chasing even cheaper prizes. "It's no good moaning, you've got to get on with it," Channon said. "Of course it's competitive. If it wasn't, I wouldn't want to know. The competition is the whole incentive. That's what gives you the buzz."

Channon has been wanting to train since he retired from football in 1986 and his credentials are sound. He has owned and bred racehorses for nearly 20 years and has enjoyed notable success. His greatest moment as a breeder came only two months ago when Ghofar won the Hennessy Gold Cup. Channon bred him at his Hampshire stud and sold him as a once-raced three-year-old. He chuckled: "I was very pleased with the price —



On the gallop: Lambourn new boy Mick Channon has a realistic view of the chances of making the grade in difficult times for his chosen profession at the time." Ghofar's dam, Royal Final, was also born at Channon's Jamesmead Stud, on the day that Channon helped Southampton beat Manchester United in the 1976 FA Cup final.

Fellow punters in those days included Alan Ball, who was often grateful to Channon for privileged "late wires". Their biggest win came one New Year's Day when the only race meeting to survive the frost was Devon and Exeter. Channon recalls: "We were playing Arsenal at home in the morning, so it had to be an off-course gamble. I hadn't told a soul about the horse but after the match, which we lost 1-0, I told 'Bally' to come to the betting shop.

The horse won at 16-1. We took home about eight grand."

Channon's love of racing was so great that football sometimes had to take second place. Lawrie McMenemy, then manager of Southampton, was more amused than amazed when Channon asked to be left out of a tour to Dubai because it clashed with the National Hunt Festival. McMenemy gave way, and influenza was given as the reason for Channon's absence. In hindsight, a trip to Dubai, home of the Maktoum family, might have been time well spent.

Channon said: "I'd be thrilled if the Arabs sent me a few horses, but I wouldn't want to be a private trainer." Many of Channon's owners are friends and businessmen from Hampshire but also backing him are Kevin Keegan and the photographer, Koo Stark, who owns a leg in a horse called Slow Exposure.

He insists that his will not be a gambling stable. This will amuse his former team colleagues, but Channon says: "Of course I like a bet, but I don't go mad." There will be no stable jockey, and fancied runners will be ridden by the best jockey available. "Pat Eddery rode nine times for Ken last season and won five times. But don't print that; it'll ruin the odds next time."

Channon's head lad is Jim Davies, who as J. H. Davies, rode Robin Wonder to victory in the County Hurdle at Cheltenham seven years ago. Davies, who has worked for David Elsworth and David Nicholson, says: "Mick's the best guy'not I've had. He's ambitious, but he's realistic. And he doesn't mind getting stuck in."

Channon's first runner will probably be the hurdler, Rowlandsons Trophy, who at present is with Cunningham-Brown. Channon said: "I'm sorry to leave Ken but you've got to get on, and I'm lucky that some of the owners are coming with me. I'm not expecting miracles but if you stick in there and you've got a good staff, you'll survive."

NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL

Reid back on old stamping ground

By Paul Newman

Leicester City and Ipswich Town have made further inroads this week against Andrew Clarke, Barne's highly rated forward, who is also heading over the £250,000 fee. United States officials, meanwhile, have contacted Clarke, who has American ancestors, to discuss the possibility of his playing for them in the World Cup final.

Barnet are one of 14 Conference clubs enjoying improved attendances this season. Their gates are up by eight per cent to an average of 2,627. The only better supported club are Dartington, whose average of 3,436 is a 48 per cent improvement on their figure in the fourth division last season.

Other clubs showing substantial improvements include Mer-

Age is no barrier to success

By Colin McQuillan

First played in 1975 to bridge the gap between juniors and seniors, under-23 championships are very much a British development. That Snarewell has converted the to a Young Masters invitation event at Dunings Mill, East Grinstead, over the next four days is recognition that players are now maturing at a much faster rate.

All four top seeds in the 16-strong men's field regularly feature in the latter stages of leading senior events. Only Peter Marshall and Simon Parke, who recently contested the British under-19 final, and Janine Bonet, of France, still compete among Juniors.

Rodney Eyles, of Australia, has beaten both Jahangir Khan and Jansher Khan during the past year, while Paul Gregory, the British doubles champion,

would almost certainly have been selected for England in the last world championship had he not been in dispute with the selectors.

The women's field of eight is similarly established. Among them are Michelle Martin and Sarah Fritz-Gerald, both Australian and Rider Show, which starts today at the Wembley Centre.

The three-day show, the first of its kind in Britain, is designed to "educate, inform and entertain the horse lover". It is the brainchild of Simon Madden, of Focus Events, who, surprised that a sport with 3½ million participants did not have its own in-house show, decided to inaugurate one. He hopes it will soon rank alongside the Boat Show and the Ski Show.

Such is the strength of the field, however, that Donna Vardy, the junior world champion, is not even seeded.

In between the demonstrations, visitors can learn about road safety, freeze marking — to prevent horse theft — and the art of the farrier.

Special attractions include the official retirement of Robert Lemieux's The Gamesmaster, the horse which propelled his rider to the forefront of the sport when selected for the 1984 Olympic three-day event squad, after placing fifth at his final Badminton year.

The 13-year-old gelding will spend his retirement hunting with the Blackmore and Sparkford Veil in Dorset.

The show, which has already sold 30,000 tickets, is open daily from 10am till 6pm.

Lemieux, who is still recovering from the broken pelvis he sustained in a fall last summer, is using the British Horse Rider Show to launch the British Cross-Country Centre due to be completed in May. The centre, on a 70-acre site at Burnham in Buckinghamshire, will consist of 150 cross-country fences, a 3,000 square metre lake, a six-furlong all-weather gallop and two steeplechase gallops. Any rider can hire the facilities which, with the recent demise of the Wylee Schooling Ground in Wiltshire, will be the only training centre of its kind in Britain.

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE LEVELS

(Figures in brackets are per cent up or down)

Attendance figures for 1989-90

and 1988-89

Source: Conference

1989-90 1988-89 % change

Dartington 2,627 2,514 +4%

Kettering 2,469 0 -2%

Southend 2,456 2,503 -2%

Welling 2,077 1,417 +45%

Wycombe 1,968 2,248 -12%

Merthyr 1,558 1,114 +33%

Cheshunt 1,507 1,255 +20%

Barrow 1,387 1,042 +33%

Telford 1,302 1,255 +4%

Shrewsbury 1,045 1,045 0%

Welling 957 1,017 -5%

Sutton 949 949 0%

Altrincham 860 860 0%

Runcorn 846 765 +10%

Northwich 755 753 +2%

Shrewsbury 700 700 0%

Ealing to face grittier Great Harwood side

The fourth of the nine rounds of Women's League will be played tomorrow when the leaders, Slough, meet third-placed Sutton Coldfield at Alexander Stadium, Perry Barr, Birmingham (Joyce Whitehead writes).

Ealing, in second place, meet Great Harwood on Dairy Meadows, Southall. The teams last met in the semi-finals of the 1989 national championship, when Ealing won 7-0, but Great Harwood, after losing to Slough in September, have drawn with Orpington and Sutton Coldfield, so Ealing face an improved side.

Hightown, who are led by Maggi Souya, are at home to Exmouth at Weymouth Sports Centre, Liverpool. Orpington play Leicester at Newstead Wood School, Orpington, and both teams are looking for their first win. At Bristol University, Stoke Bishop, Clifton, play Cheltenham.

Standings (P W D L F A Pts)

Stourport 3 3 0 0 12 0 12

Exeter 3 3 0 0 12 0 12

Sutton Coldfield 3 1 2 0 20 1 16

Leicester 3 1 2 0 20 1 16

Hightown 3 1 1 1 6 5 6

Orpington 3 0 2 1 5 5 5

Great Harwood 3 0 2 1 5 5 5

Exmouth 3 0 1 2 1 5 2

Slough 3 0 1 2 1 5 2

Weymouth 3 0 1 2 1 5 1

Leicester 3 0 1 2 1 5 1

Orpington 3 0 1 2 1 5 1

Stoke Bishop 3 0 1 2 1 5 1

Cheltenham 3 0 1 2 1 5 1

Exmouth 3 0 1 2 1 5 1

Great Harwood 3 0 1 2 1 5 1

Stourport 3 0 1 2 1 5 1

Exeter 3 0 1 2 1 5 1

Leicester 3 0 1 2 1 5 1

Hightown 3 0 1 2 1 5 1

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Great Harwood 3 0 1 2 1 5 1

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Billy is making up for lost time

From David Powell
Athletics Correspondent
Sydney

"And the winner of the gold medal William Cee." The stadium applauded and Britain's discovery of a potential successor to Sebastian Coe enjoyed his moment of glory.

He would have enjoyed it more had he been introduced by his correct name: seven years after his European junior 800 metres triumph, Ikem Billy is still struggling to establish his identity.

He never caught up with Coe, but has one last chance to do so, if not justify, the plaudits of 1983. In just over a fortnight's time Billy will be up for his debut as a senior international champion, while Coe prepares to take his bow. The Commonwealth Games in Auckland bring together Billy and Coe as England colleagues.

At last there are signs that the Billy of 1983, when he was the world's top-ranked junior, and 1984, when he won the Bislett Games in Oslo and consistently ran 1min 44sec to 1min 45sec, is returning.

An injury which he attributes to his attempt to profit from his "next Coe" reputation exchanged three years of a promising career. "In 1984 I ran 46 races when the normal circumstances would have been 10," Billy, looking relaxed at the English training camp in Narrabeen, just outside Manly, said yesterday.

"That's what messed up my ankle — a disease in the bone from over-use. Money, TV, you name it, I was influenced by it. I was 19 and it was good fun to race everywhere, but it was a big mistake. It set me back three years and, though I ran in 1988, it was a waste of time because I wasn't fit."

"1989 was the first year I enjoyed for five years and everything has picked up in the last few weeks. Coe is the best athlete we have ever had in

Billy: promising a surprise

Britain but he's going to get no favours from me. The way I'm running at the moment I'm going to surprise a few people and I reckon I've got a good chance of winning."

Apart from Coe, there is Tom McKeon, the World Cup winner of Scotland, and the not insignificant matter of three Kenyans. "We are looking at golds in every event from 400 metres up and one-two-three in the 800 metres," the leading coach to the Kenyan team said in a television documentary recently.

"I can't see that with the likes of Coe, McKeon and myself around," Billy said. "A lot has been said about the Kenyans but I see the biggest threat to me as being Coe and McKeon."

If Billy sounds arrogant, suggesting that Coe and McKeon are a threat to him rather than to them, with a best time of 1min 44.65sec he perhaps has a right to suggest that victory is within him.

His problem, he says, is concessionary. "My weakness is that I don't pay attention. I always always stay off the pace but I'm one of the fastest finishers."

When McKeon beat Eriq [the Olympic champion] at Crystal Palace my last lap was just as fast as his but I was off the pace and wasn't prepared for them to go. At the Commonwealth Games I will just go with it and stay there."

Billy's World Student Games silver medal and his victory in the AAA championship last year were testimony to his return to the fringes of world class.

The 1990 model, at the age of 22 this month, is the same determined version it was in 1983. Only the name has changed.

Auckland meeting will be prelude to a drug-testing pact

By John Goodbody

New Zealand and Australia have confirmed that they are joining forces to fight drug abuse in sport in the first step towards a Commonwealth-wide pact.

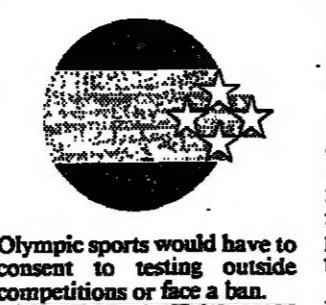
A meeting of Commonwealth sports ministers in Auckland in February after the Games will consider a three-pronged proposal drawn up by New Zealand, Australian, Canadian and British sports and medical administrators last year.

However, New Zealand and Australian officials have reiterated that they are keen to set up their own agreement as soon as possible.

Mark Marshall, director of the New Zealand Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association's medical commission, said that nothing would be agreed "then and then" at the February meeting.

"There was a suggestion of a quadrilateral arrangement and it will probably eventually come off. But, in my view, it would be more sensible initially for New Zealand to enter into a bilateral agreement with our nearest neighbours, Australia."

The drug-testing programme's three points are education, out-of-competition testing, and legislation. Under the draft agreement among the four nations, all athletes in



Olympic sports would have to consent to testing outside competitions or face a ban.

New Zealand officials said that their counterparts in Australia to test New Zealand competitors training across there. At present, competitors can escape local testing by going abroad. The agreement could also allow New Zealand to seek tests on specific Australian competitors — and vice versa — if there was any suspicion they were using banned substances.

Asked when the New Zealand-Australia agreement could be signed, Marshall said: "The Australians are very keen and we are very keen, and hopefully it will be a few months after the Games."

The climate is particularly suitable at the moment for action to be taken. Australia has recently become concerned about the problems of drug-taking following a Government inquiry into the subject. A 520-page interim report of a commission chaired by Senator John Black, who had powers to force individuals to be interviewed or face pen-

alties, has already detailed how widespread the problem has been.

Canada has also had the Dublin investigation, set up after Ben Johnson tested positive at the Seoul Olympics. Its recommendations to the Canadian Government are expected to be published within the next two months.

In Britain, the Government is expected to announce this month that it will be the first country in the Commonwealth to make the possession of anabolic steroids, the muscle-building drug, a criminal offence unless the individual has a valid medical prescription.

Colin Moynihan, the Minister for Sport, who is scheduled to attend the meeting in Auckland, is well known for his opposition to drug-taking in sport, while this week the Sports Council announced it was setting up its own investigation into drug-taking in weightlifting.

In principle, any agreement could develop into a pact for the whole Commonwealth. But Marshall said this could present problems, as many countries had different penalties and many did not have life bans for competitors caught using certain drugs.

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